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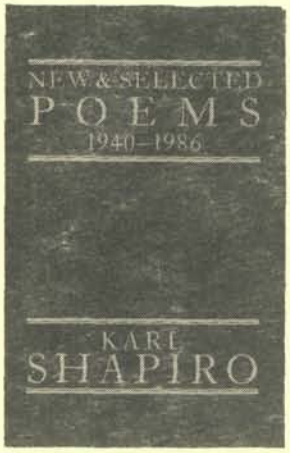

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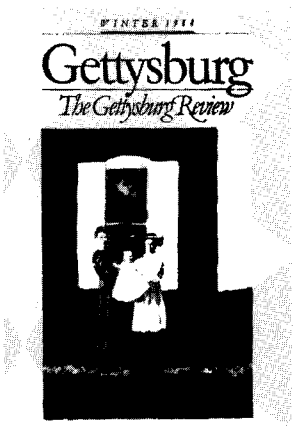

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Out of My Mind

Some Things I Didn't Write

JEREMY BERNSTEIN

Not long ago, while rummaging in a drawer, I came across a letter written to me by the late P. A. M. Dirac dated the twelfth of December 1962. It consisted of three sentences—Dirac was noted for his pithiness—which were the following:

Dear Bernstein,

Thank you for your letter. I feel doubtful about the project because my life has been too straightforward and uneventful, and I do not know how you could get enough material for an article in the New Yorker. I think it would be better for you to write about some scientist who is more in the public eye, such as Oppenheimer or Wigner.

Yours sincerely,
P. A. M. Dirac

For reasons I will explain, my main feeling upon the receipt of this letter was one of relief. It had indeed been my intention to write a profile of Dirac for *The New Yorker*. Dirac, who died in the fall of 1984, was one of the creators of the modern quantum theory. He was one of the greatest scientists of this century. He was also, in his way, an incredible character. I had, in fact, at the time I received his letter, already done one interview with him that was conducted for the most part in some sort of copse near the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where Dirac was chopping a path with an ax in the general direction of Trenton. I joined him in the chopping, and as we chopped I asked him some questions about his life.

My most vivid memory of this colloquy was his request that, in my putative profile, I should be sure to give sufficient credit to Schrödinger for his contributions to the invention of the quantum theory. My thought was, Dear God, we are standing here in this copse discussing the assignment of credit for what is probably the major scientific discovery of this century. In any event, that interview had occurred a couple of months before Dirac's unexpected letter that, I imagine, was a reply to a request of mine for a second interview. The "Wigner" referred to in his letter was Eugene Wigner, who was in fact Dirac's brother-in-law. Indeed, Dirac often introduced his wife as "Wigner's sister," as in, "I would like you to meet Wigner's sister." Wigner, who like his brother-in-law won the Nobel Prize in physics, would certainly be a fine subject for a profile by somebody, but not by me. His politics, similar to those of his Hungarian colleagues Edward Teller and J. von Neumann, are enough different from my own that I would not have been comfortable with them. Had Oppenheimer lived beyond 1967, I would have moved heaven and earth to have written his profile.

As I mentioned, my primary reaction upon receiving Dirac's letter was one of relief. By this time the catastrophe was fully apparent of the profile I had published the previous spring of T. D. Lee and C. N. Yang, the first two Chinese physicists to win the Nobel Prize. The profile catalyzed what I believe would have been an inevitable rupture in their collaborative relationship, with the result that both men soon after left the Institute for Advanced Study where they had been professors. I was told by a good friend of mine at the Institute that, while no one there blamed me for what had happened, there was a feeling that it had better not happen again. The lesson I had learned is that writing about people can have effects one cannot anticipate. My response to this was a decision, made easier by Dirac's letter, not to write about any more of my contemporaries in physics. In-

JEREMY BERNSTEIN's autobiographical memoir *The Life It Brings* has recently been published by Ticknor & Fields.

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deed, while I did all kinds of writing for *The New Yorker* during the next decade—including a lot in "The Talk of the Town," some of it, oddly enough, having to do with the theater—the next profile I wrote of a physicist was of Albert Einstein, and it was not published until 1973.

Nonetheless, although I was working full-time as both a teaching and a research physicist, I had been bitten by the writing bug—an incurable disease—and the only question was what to write about. In my last column on this general subject ("Breaking in at *The New Yorker*" in the Winter 1987 issue), I described some of the things I did write about, and in this column, I want to describe some of the things I didn't write about. There were lessons learned.

The first subject that presented itself after I had written the Lee and Yang profile, but before it was published, seemed to have descended upon me like manna from heaven. By the use of all sorts of ingenuity, the physicists and engineers from Brookhaven National Laboratory, where I was then working, had just saved the life of a young boy who had fallen down a very deep well in front of his home on Long Island, not far from Brookhaven. The local rescue services had not been able to extricate him and in desperation had appealed to the workers at the Lab to see if they—I don't say "we" because I had no part in it—could find some method for saving him. I no longer remember what was actually done, but, whatever it was, it worked. It seemed to be a happy story about science, with a happy ending. After clearing the idea with William Shawn, then *The New Yorker*'s editor in chief, I called the boy's family. They did not seem particularly eager to talk with me, but their attitude softened when I explained that I was from the Laboratory. They were willing to see me—at least willing for me to drive over to where they lived and meet their son.

As it happened, I had just bought a blue Sun Beam Alpine convertible with the proceeds of my first *New Yorker* article on Corsica. It was the best, and in fact the last, car I actually owned. Even starting it was wonderful, since it gave off a deep, powerful growl. In any event, I recall driving this spanking new car, with its top down, to my rendezvous with the family. I drove through the flatlands of eastern Long Island, listening to music on the radio and thinking that this was the good life. My euphoric mood lasted until I came to their rural house. I don't know what I had expected. I think that I thought that Long Island was populated by either physicists or members of the South Hampton Lawn Tennis Club, if that is what it is called. I had read a good many short stories by John O'Hara about the Long Island poor and middle class, but none of it registered until I saw that house. It was worse, as far as I was concerned, than being simply shabby and run-down. It had the look that one sometimes finds with poor people who have made a considerable effort to look their best but just can't quite afford to bring it off.

The people inside the house—the mother, father, and son—resembled it. The word *careworn* kept going through my head. With my new blue Sun Beam Alpine parked in their driveway, I felt like a Martian. I asked my questions, took my notes, and then left. Once back in the car I found myself confronted with a problem. I knew that whatever happened I could not take money for writing about these people. I felt that I had traded on their gratitude to the Lab in order to get to see them, and that I had had no right to do that, and still less right to get paid for it. For a while I thought of writing the article anyway and then sending them the money. I couldn't do this either. They weren't charity cases. They were honest, hard-working people trying to get by. In the end I never wrote the article, and I don't think Mr. Shawn ever asked me what had happened to it. However, I learned a very valuable lesson—namely, I would never put myself into a position economically where I *had* to do that kind of writing. I would always earn my basic living by doing physics, so that I would be free to take on only those writing assignments that I felt I could live with.

The next example of something, or someone, I failed to write about requires some explanation. After having spent two years or so at Brookhaven, I decided that I had to leave. The problem was not the science, which was wonderful, but the isolation. I have always been a rather solitary person, but life at Brookhaven raised solitude to an art form. I was living in an old officers' barrack. I recall vividly, one evening in the middle of winter as the snow was falling and creating an unearthly white carapace, sitting alone in my

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barrack reading *Mountolive*—the third volume of Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*—and coming across the following exchange: " '*Melissa, comment vous défendez-vous contre la solitude?*' Her response, for some queer reason, cut him to the heart. She turned upon him an eye replete with all the candor of experience and replied softly: '*Monsieur, je suis devenue la solitude même.*' " Upon reading this, I thought, Right, I've got to get out of here! As it happened, New York University was in the process of building up its physics department. I had spent the war years in New York and had grown to love it. In fact, I had sublet a small apartment in the city in which I was spending weekends, so the idea of moving permanently to the city seemed very appealing. Some friends of mine did a bit of midwifery, and I managed to get a job offer from NYU. I was told that if I wanted a tenure offer it would take more time, but if I would accept an associate professorship without tenure it could be arranged at once. I had never held a proper academic job and knew nothing about academic politics. I am not sure I really understood what tenure meant. All I knew was that I had to get out of Brookhaven, and, in my haste, I chose the most rapid solution. It was, as will become clear, a mistake—one of those mistakes that constitutes a fork in the road in one's life.

Before this became apparent, several years passed. During this time I developed a wonderful routine for the summers. Come the first week in June, I would decamp for Switzerland. I spent the summers working at CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research), an international laboratory devoted to research in the physics of elementary particles, which is located on the French-Swiss border near Geneva. It was during these summers that I began to climb mountains, which led to several articles that I actually did write. It was also during this time that I first heard Jacques Brel perform, and Jacques Brel is someone, as it happened, about whom I did not write.

During the late 1950s, when I was living in Paris, Brel was just emerging as a superstar of the French cabaret and music hall. I never got to hear him sing then, but from the radio I knew many of his early songs, such as "La Valse à mille temps," almost by heart. What I did not know then was a quirk in French law—a sort of puritan throwback—that required gambling casinos in France to contribute to the cultural uplifting of the communities in which they were located. So all around the neighborhood of Geneva, at places like Aix-les-Bains, Évian-les-Bains, and Divonne-les-Bains, and at other places in France, the casinos contained concert halls where both classical musicians and popular singers, such as Brel, performed. It was, as I recall, in Divonne in the summer of 1965 that I first saw Brel perform.

I was completely thunderstruck. From his records I had no notion that Jacques Brel was such a brilliant actor. He simply *became* every one of the characters he sang about. As good as I find his records, they only convey the outer surface of his genius as a performing artist. I decided that, one way or another, I was going to write a profile of Jacques Brel. But how? Here entered a piece of good luck. The very next December, Brel came to Carnegie Hall in New York to give his first American concert. From the posters it was easy to discover that his concert here had been arranged by the Harold Leventhal Management, so I wrote them a letter. At that time Brel was almost totally unknown here. My idea was, as a warm-up exercise before writing an actual profile, to do a "Talk of the Town" story about Brel in New York, and the management agency was only too delighted, considering the publicity it could generate, to arrange that. I spent the better part of two days tooling around New York with Brel, and I watched him rehearse as well. The more I saw of him, the more I liked him.

The concert was a huge success. French-speaking people had come from all over the East Coast, and Carnegie Hall was packed. The following Monday, December 6, Robert Alden wrote in the *New York Times:*

A young man from Belgium, Jacques Brel, burst on the American scene with all the excitement of an electrical storm on Saturday night. In his American debut, he left his Carnegie Hall audience limp and in awe of an extraordinary ability. Unknown in the United States, Mr. Brel has battled his way up in 13 years from the small depressing nightclubs of Paris to the big music halls of Europe. A lean, lank man, he is now recognized with Leo Ferré and Georges Brassens in the front rank of the chansoniers of Europe, those people who not only perform their material but write it.

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I wrote my "Talk of the Town" piece, but Shawn never used it, even though it was set up in type. Perhaps he felt that Brel was not well enough known or perhaps he felt that I would be covering the same ground in the profile I was intending to write. I was, of course, disappointed not to see my piece run, but by way of compensation, I had an understanding with Brel that the following summer, when I was to return to Geneva, I could watch him as he made his tour of the casino music halls nearby.

I still have the notes I took that summer. I see from them that Brel was born on the eighth of April 1929; that he had a brother; that he had three children, one of whom, a daughter, I got to meet. I see that his mother was Flemish and his father Walloon. Some of Brel's most powerful songs have Flemish in them, and some of them are extremely harsh on what he found to be the intellectual and spiritual limitations of "Les Flamandes"—the title of one of his bitterest songs. I asked him what his parents thought of his music. He told me that they were very old and that the only thing they realized was that he was still not around home. He let me listen to a tape in which one could hear one of his songs evolving as he wrote it. First there was some inchoate humming; then a few words, then a recognizable melody and more words; then the strumming of his guitar and then, miraculously, a complete and wonderful song. I watched as he came backstage after the show —he never gave encores, which he thought were a form of begging. When he came backstage, he would be wringing wet and practically limp with exhaustion. Along with these notes, I had assembled a small collection of books on the French chanson, since it was my intention to set Brel in the tradition of the chanson, which can be traced back to the troubadours in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This had been my intention. Then the roof fell in.

Late that summer the chairman of the physics department at NYU appeared at CERN and informed me that there was trouble with my tenure. The complaint was never very clear since, God knows, I was publishing at a vigorous clip on both physics and non-physics subjects, but at least part of the problem had to do with my writing for *The New Yorker*. I had sensed that some of my colleagues did not approve of my writing for what they thought was a chichi, non-serious publication, but I hadn't paid much attention. It had never occurred to me that this would be an issue in my getting tenure. But there it was. Furthermore, I was about to write a major article on a man who could well be regarded by these same people as a mere nightclub entertainer. Faced with this, to my everlasting regret, I dropped the project. This, as it turned out, had no effect on the matter of my tenure, which had already been decided, essentially, in the negative. The futile battle went on for over a year and finally culminated in a visit to the dean—a man whose lack of academic distinction was a perfect complement to his arrogance and who said to me—literally—"How do I know if we grant you tenure you won't simply use it to find another job?" Where do universities find these people?

A year or so later, after I had relocated and had gotten tenure elsewhere, I decided to re-open my file on Brel, but it was too late. During the summer that I followed Brel, he once came offstage and said, "One of these days I will come off the stage and never go back." In October of 1967, Brel, at age thirty-seven, announced that he would do no more stage performances, and I don't think he ever did. I wrote him to ask if he was still interested in my doing a profile of him, but he never answered my letter. On the ninth of October 1978 Brel died. It turned out that he had had cancer for some ten years, and that may well have been the real reason he stopped performing. In 1973 he moved to the island of Hiva Oa, some eight hundred miles north of Tahiti. There he fell in love with a Polynesian girl who was with him when he died. I wrote his obituary for *The New Yorker* under Notes and Comment in "The Talk of the Town." The last few lines read, "A year ago, however, he made one more record—the first in many years. As I write this, I am listening to one of the songs on this record. It is about death: '*Mourir cela n'est rien. Mourir la belle affaire. Mais vieillir. . . . Oh, vieillir. . . .*' Brel never did grow old. When he died, he was forty-nine." And I learned a valuable lesson from all of this—that never again would I *not* write about something for fear that someone would think it was beneath my dignity.

After my debacle at NYU, I decided that I

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was entitled to a treat, and this brings me to the last example. By 1967, I had written a series of articles about the invention of mountain climbing and its practice; they were collected in a book entitled *Ascent*. Among other things, I had studied the evolution of the mountain aesthetic in nineteenth-century Europe where, before that time, snow-covered mountains were generally regarded as objects of fear, and often as simply ugly. I had been reading about the mountains of Asia ever since I was a child. I recall devouring James Ramsey Ullman's book *High Conquest* when it came out in 1941. I knew by heart Ullman's account of the British expeditions to Mount Everest in the 1920s, culminating in the disappearance of George Leigh-Mallory and Andrew Irvine in 1924 somewhere near the summit of the mountain. Even then, in 1941, I had a very clear ambition to at least see Mount Everest. Then, in 1967, I realized that with a little enterprise I could actually bring this about.

I had a new university job, at the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey, and I told them that I would not be able to begin there until the spring term of 1968. I then went to William Shawn and said that we—we being my Chamonix guide and friend Claude Jaccoux and his wife Michéle, an Olympic skier—wanted to go to Nepal to do something similar to what we had done in the Alps. Mr. Shawn, it turned out, seemed to have a special curiosity about Nepal (he seemed to have a special curiosity about nearly everything). I think one of his sons had spent some time there. He asked me how much money I thought we would need in order to spend some months in Nepal. I said, without having given it a great deal of thought, that ten thousand dollars would do it. The next day I had the check, and the die was cast.

In 1967, not a great deal, apart from mountaineering books, had been written about Nepal. Indeed, the country had been closed to foreigners for a century ending in 1950, which is why, until 1953, the British had always tried to climb Mount Everest from the Tibetan side. However, I had some climbing friends who had been to Nepal, and they told me about an outfit in Kathmandu called Mountain Travel that had recently gotten into the business of organizing treks to places like the base of Mount Everest. In 1965, the Nepalese government, because of border tensions with Tibet, had closed down actual climbing—the ban was lifted in 1969—and trekking, which was in fact being done by very few people, was the only sort of alpinism taking place in the country. I wrote to one Lieutenant-colonel James Owen Merion Roberts, formerly of 2d King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles, and then the founder and proprietor of Mountain Travel, to state our case. In June of 1967 I received a cheerful letter from Roberts on his stationery, which had printed across the bottom, "Pack A Suitcase And Take Off For Mount Everest," stating that for a mere $425 apiece he could launch us on a thirty-seven-day trek from Kathmandu to the base of the mountain. Early that fall we arrived in Kathmandu where I spent some four months wandering all over the country gathering material for what eventually became a profile of the country and a book that I called *The Wildest Dreams of Kew* after the Kipling poem with the lines

> And the wildest dreams of Kew
> are the facts of Kathmandu.

The book was not a great commercial success, but it did acquire a certain cult following. People who read it and were then inspired to follow our trek would send me photos of themselves looking at pictures of us in the book, at the very places where the pictures were taken. In the fall of 1986, on the occasion of my fifth trip to the country, I found a secondhand copy of the British edition in a wonderful bookstore in Kathmandu. I bought it and noticed that some of its pages were somewhat waterlogged. Some trekker must have had it along and fallen into a creek—a common occurrence on treks in Nepal. In any event, many people have asked me to write a new edition, since the present one is both out of print and out-of-date, and during my last couple of trips, I had been gathering material for a possible new edition. Then last fall, when I was there, it began to dawn on me that a new edition would be impossible. The difficulty was not simply a matter of updating facts. That would have been easy. The difficulty was that during the twenty years I had been observing Nepal it had become, for better and for worse, another country.

Tourism, which was barely visible in 1967, has become the principal foreign currency

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earner. In 1962, to cite some figures I recently came across, there were less than four thousand tourists entering the country during the entire year. In 1986, there were over two hundred thousand. Before 1962, the same report shows, there were only 150 hotel beds in all of Nepal. At the present time there are 6,870 high-quality hotel beds and many others in lodges and inns. In rupee terms—the Nepalese rupee is worth about five cents—tourism now brings in nearly 725 million rupees annually against some seven million in 1962. When Claude and Michéle Jaccoux and I were there in 1967, there were three "official" trekkers: people who had listed on their entry permits that their reason for coming to Nepal was to trek. Since that is what we had done, I assume that we were the three. There are now close to forty thousand official trekkers. All of this may sound like nothing but good news, until one analyzes what it has done to and for the country.

On the negative side, it has stretched scarce resources, such as wood, to their limits. In the Everest region, for example, this has resulted in a ban on trekkers using wood for cooking fires and the like. But most trekkers take at least some of their meals in local restaurants and inns and, for economic reasons—the high cost of kerosene chief among them—the proprietors of these establishments use wood. The Himalayan mountainsides have been largely denuded of wood, with the result that the eroded land is being washed into the Bay of Bengal.

Tourism has also helped to skew traditional Nepalese values. Begging, which was essentially nonexistent in 1967, has now become endemic, especially in places where tourists are common. Furthermore, since the Nepalese are a tough mountain people, some of this begging goes beyond being simply aggressive play. Last fall, a woman who was on the trek with us was surrounded by village children who forcibly attempted to take her money from her. Talking with children, which was such a delight, has turned into an incessant chant of "rupees, rupees, rupees."

On the other hand, these children will, on the average, live longer than any previous generation of Nepalese children. In twenty years, the life span has moved up—counting infant mortality—from the mid-thirties to the mid-forties. From a Western point of view, this additional gift of life—brought about by the introduction of modern medicine and despite the fact that there are still only about five hundred doctors in the whole country of some fifteen million people—is worth almost anything. Perhaps it is. I certainly think so. But one is describing a country where religion is part of the very fabric of life and in which the major religions—Hinduism and Buddhism—have in common the belief that the value of this life is only in how it prepares us for the next. Can this beautiful tradition survive the invasion on every side by radios, automobiles, and all the rest? I am not sure.

This past fall I had an experience that persuaded me definitely that I could not write a new edition of my book. I had made a three-and-a-half-week trek around the Annapurna range in western Nepal. It had been a tough trek of well over two hundred miles, a fair amount of it at high altitude. It was time to be getting home. On the last day, I was walking through a rice paddy near the shore of a beautiful lake, feeling both tired and exalted. It was a beautiful, warm and sunny day. From the other direction came two young Nepalese boys. When they got close to me, each one picked up some kind of weed or burr and threw it at me. It was a purely gratuitous act of hostility. It was more symbolic than menacing. I thought, What have we done to these people—we tourists? We have brought them out of their isolation and have begun to turn them into flawed copies of ourselves. While I still love this place, the romantic feeling I had about it twenty years ago is gone, and with it, my book. The lesson I learned—and it is not very original—is that one cannot turn back the clock.

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You Probably Don't Know Me

ARISTIDES

I used occasionally to play racquetball with Saul Bellow, the Nobel Prize–winning novelist. I was then in my late thirties, Bellow in his late fifties. To offer an athletic as distinct from an aesthetic criticism, if a Nobel Prize were offered for racquetball, Saul Bellow would not have won it. He was a middling player, I a bit above middling, but the difference in our ages made our games, to me at any rate, a touch frightening. The problem was that Bellow knew only one way to play, and that was full-out, which at his age was dangerous. To be "in the pink" is thought to be a fine thing; but on the racquetball court it didn't take Saul Bellow long to be somewhere in between the vermilion and the magenta. Sometimes, after a particularly vigorous point, I would inquire the score from my place at the service line and hear it come back to me in the piping, rather quavering voice of a man physically *in extremis*. My God, I thought, what if he drops dead right here on this racquetball court! And then, tenderheartedly, near bursting with compassion, I proceeded to think—of myself.

In particular, I began to imagine how I might be treated by the press in the event of such an unpleasant happenstance. Suddenly I saw a headline that read, "Nobel Novelist Goes Down for Final Count as Essayist Looks On." I imagined a grainy photograph taken inside the racquetball court, in whose caption I am mentioned as "Man at left in shorts unidentified." Spinning an unascertainable number of years forward into the future, I espied my own two-inch-long obituary, in the dolorous typeface of the *New York Times*, carrying the small-type headline "Man Who Served Death to Nobel Writer Dies Out of Court." Whew! A damn near thing and luckily avoided, not only for Saul Bellow but for me.

I am not certain why I seem naturally to identify with men and women who in newspaper photographs are themselves unidentified, but I do. I find my heart also going out to those who are given brief obituaries for playing cameo roles in history through their relation to the lives of the truly famous: the ex-wife of the third son of an American president, a lawyer who represented celebrities, a half sister to a shah, a brother-in-law to a well-known comedian, a violinist who toured with Caruso, a Hollywood voice coach, the owner of an umbrella and cane shop that catered to politicians, the widow of a cellist, the father of an all-American basketball player, the great-grandson of Karl Marx. So, too, am I taken by people who have limited, if not to say severely restricted, claims to fame, such as the man who took the famous photograph of the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima, one partner of a famous bridge team, the first black federal bankruptcy judge, a prominent hand surgeon, an expert on jaw malfunctions, the lyricist for "If You Knew Susie," or the creator of the first Orange Julius. The late M. Doug Wood, a name unknown to almost everyone, provides a perfect example of what I have in mind. His obituary in the *New York Times* of May 7, 1987, reads *in toto:*

M. Doug Wood

Salt Lake City, May 5 (AP)—M. Doug Wood, a co-founder of Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics, died Saturday at the age of 83.

Besides his wife, his survivors include his daughter, Carol Davis Evans of Tucson, Ariz., and four grandchildren.

The briefest possible obituary for one of the founders of speed-reading—has the punishment ever more snugly fit the crime? Well, I recall thinking, reading this pared-down obit on the day it appeared, at least it won't take

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anyone too long to read about his demise. Doubtless, Doug would have wanted it that way.

I wonder, too, if when alive, Mr. M. Doug Wood did not feel a slight but fairly frequent twinge of resentment over the greater fame enjoyed by Evelyn Wood, his wife, whose name has become synonymous with the dubious invention of reading so fast that one can ignore style, nuance, and irony. Did Ira Gershwin, who wrote all those lovely lyrics, feel a similar resentment at the greater fame of his brother George? Doug Wood and Ira Gershwin, though they may have shared naught else, share the status, at least so far as the public knew, of being sidekicks, right-hand men, secondo dons. Of honorable sidekicks, there has been no paucity: the Lone Ranger had Tonto, Roy Rogers had the untidy Gabby Hayes, Wonder Woman had a pudgy, bonbon-chomping pal named Tootsie. At a higher literary level, Sancho Panza and Falstaff are second bananas with as much if not more potassium than the first bananas with whom their creators bunched them.

To play the role of sidekick, to accept the status of second banana, however substantial the rewards, nonetheless requires certain gifts of temperament: one must be prepared to subsume one's interest to those of another, to settle for less in the way of attention and glory and other of those prizes that men and women, in their well-advertised vanity, have always striven for. One must, in short, be ready to leggo one's ego.

Many jobs—in fact, most jobs—demand the submergence of one's own interests. In literary life, an editor, a biographer, a translator, an anthologist, a bibliographer—all are indispensable, yet all are second, some even third, bananas. Journalists used to be third, possibly fourth, bananas, but no longer. Journalists, especially television journalists, are usually among the best-known local people in any city; and my guess is that most of us can name our local anchorman much more readily than our congressman. Any good Marxist would take all this as self-evidently true; after all, journalists control the means of production—and what is being produced is, of course, fame.

Ah, fame, which Milton (neither Berle nor Friedman) called "that last infirmity of noble mind," is far from afflicting only the noble-minded. The desire for fame was once thought to be, along with the love of truth, a sign of great character. But today everyone knows that a proper attitude toward fame requires that one disregard it, or at least look askance at it. Fame, it is understood, is as ephemeral as a suntan—perhaps more so. Fame is tinny, fame is bogus, fame is ultimately empty. In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes, or so said a man so famous that I think I shall not even bother to give his name. Fame is a shuck and a crock, humbug and poppycock. Who needs it?

Sorry to have to report, I believe I do. If needing fame is perhaps putting it a bit strongly, let me revise that statement and say that, at a minimum, I know I should rather like it. As a general rule, I would add that, unless you happen to be cheating on your husband or wife, or are employed as a spy, it is usually nicer to be known than not. One of the few ways that I failed to misspend my youth was sitting in bars, but I clearly recall, in my early twenties, the glow of appreciation I felt when, awaiting a table in a popular Italian restaurant I had been to the week before, the bartender, a middle-aged man of grave mien (he was probably ten years younger than I am now), remembered what I drank. "It's scotch and water, isn't it, sir?" he said. My heart leapt the bar and landed in his pocket. In remembering what I drank, he seemed to discern that I was not of the mass, to lift me above the ruck of ordinary suckers, and to make plain that I was a young man of rare quality whose very drinking habits were worth noting. Had we been in France, I should have grasped the lapels of his short red bartender's jacket and kissed him on both cheeks. Instead, in my more measured middlewestern manner, I merely lavishly overtipped him.

If it is nice to be known, it is even nicer, for one who has a taste for fame, to be talked about. In contemporary life, being famous may be no more complicated than being talked about. Of course, the way one is talked about is decisive. My own first small bout of fame—that is to say, of arranging to have myself talked about—came in high school when I turned down membership in a senior boys' honorary society for students who had been on the school's athletic teams or active in extracurricular activities. I was passed over

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the first time new members were taken in, as was a friend of mine who was also a likely candidate for membership. One day, talking about it, we resolved that, should we be asked to join on the second round of invitations, we would tell the members of this honorary society to stow it in Ashtabula.

The morning I was informed I had been elected, I told the two boys who had come to break the happy news to me that I was sorry but I must refuse membership, owing to my having so many other activities. Later that morning my friend, who had also been elected, asked, in a worried voice, if I would mind greatly if he went back on his pledge, broke our compact, and accepted membership. I told him that of course it was fine with me, that I quite understood his position, that he was not to worry about it in the slightest. What I really felt was delight to be doing this alone, so that I wouldn't have to share the distinction of being the first boy in the school's history to refuse membership in this generally admired society. The limelight, such as it was, would be mine and mine alone. It would be I, and I alone, who would be talked about. And so I was—for about two or three days, after which everyone lost interest. But while it lasted, I have to add, I enjoyed it immensely.

No doubt about it, fame was jolly, but as with many another of the jolly items on life's menu—food and sex jump to mind—it didn't last very long. As with food and sex, so with fame: one couldn't subsist very long on the mere memory of it. Himself no stranger to fame, Freud once said that the artist gives up fame, money, and the love of beautiful women for his art, through which he hopes to win fame, money, and the love of beautiful women. His subject was sublimation, a point on which I have never been quite convinced: Is Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for example, sublimating through his writing? To ask the question is to ridicule it. Although fame is one of those things one is not supposed to want, most people nonetheless seem to. "I'm really a very private person," many a starlet has told ten or twenty million people on many a talk show. Even quite bashful people, when it is available to them, do not altogether shun fame; they merely prefer that people talk about them when they are not present.

A desire for fame, and of a quite crude kind, was certainly among the motives of my own incipient urge to become a writer. When, at roughly the age of twenty, I thought I might one day be able to write, I did not wish to do so because I felt I possessed powerful truths that only I was capable of formulating for the world. Nor was I driven to work free, as the boys in the head trades might put it, from a terrible childhood that left me many a ghost to bury in one or another kind of writing. True, I adored the sound, shape, and feel of words and was much taken with the superior game of lining them up in sentences and paragraphs, but I cannot really say that I was impelled to write out of aesthetic necessity. Something far simpler and rather more embarrassing to report was at work; this was that I felt a tremendous desire, ardor, make that sheer heat to see my name in print. I would dreamily imagine it in different typefaces: in the Caslon Old Face of *The New Yorker*, in the all-caps Bembo of *Poetry*, in the Times Roman of the *Times Literary Supplement*. Just my name, you understand; what appeared under or over it mattered scarcely at all. Bodoni bold of me to admit to this coarse vanity, but I tell you, sans serif, that I would have willingly exchanged a toe or an appendix to find my name in any of those or many another magazine. In listing the motives for writing that Orwell set down in his famous essay "Why I Write," he put first, "Sheer egotism." No dope that George.

"You remind me of a famous actor," said the young man checking me out in the express lane at the supermarket on a steamy Sunday evening, "but I can't remember his name." "How can you be sure I'm not that famous actor?" I asked. "Because you wouldn't be here," he replied—quite rightly, too. He never was able to recall the actor's name, and I left hoping that the actor wasn't, say, Ernest Borgnine. Looking like someone famous can carry its own comic ironies. One summer I saw a man at the Ravinia Music Festival outside Chicago wearing a bright red T-shirt across whose front large white letters proclaimed, "I Am Not Cesar Romero." Of course, he looked exactly like Cesar Romero, a condition he must have enjoyed hugely; for if he didn't, why was he wearing a mustache and hairdo altogether similar to "the old Latin lover's," as the gutter press might describe him. Which reminds me that it was in the

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gutter press—the *National Enquirer*? the *Star*?—that I noted an item about the actress Farrah Fawcett wishing to make a movie in which she plays Fawn Hall, Colonel Oliver North's assistant, who rather looks like Farrah Fawcett and may even have been consciously imitating the actress's looks. What we have here, then, is an actress wanting to play the part of someone who, in so-called real life, may have been modeling herself on that actress to begin with. Rich stuff. Where did you say you wanted that mirror put up, Señor Borges?

To look like someone who is famous is one thing; to be the child of someone who is famous is quite another, much more difficult thing. There is an amusing story about the son of Arnold Schönberg reprimanding his father for scolding him, arguing that he is after all the son of a great composer and hence someone rather better born than Schönberg himself. But most stories about the children of the famous, especially the artistically famous, are stories of sadness, squalor, and defeat. Nathan Asch, the son of the once world-famous novelist Sholem Asch, in a heartbreaking memoir entitled "My Father and I," wrote: "There is more apostasy, suicide, homosexuality, fraud, and lying as well as plain ne'er-do-wellism among [the children of famous artists] than among the children of other kinds of people." Without knowing the first fact of their actual lives, one's sympathies immediately go out to the daughter of Rita Hayworth and Orson Welles, the son of Mary McCarthy and Edmund Wilson, all the children of Picasso. And one silently thanks one's own parents for the unconscious kindness implied in their remaining, outside their circle of friends and business acquaintances, happily obscure.

Once, when working as a publisher's editor, I was told that a man with a manuscript wished to see me. Small, red-haired, with refined features, he set his manuscript upon my desk before introducing himself. On a white card pasted to a black plastic manuscript cover was typed an academic-sounding title and under it the name, followed by the suffix "Jr.," of the most famous producer in the history of Hollywood. "Are you . . . ," I began, about to ask the question he had doubtless been asked hundreds, perhaps thousands of times already. His eyelids drooped over his eyes, he nodded his head slightly, and there was no need to finish my question. In the brief droop of those eyelids I saw a life haunted by the ghost of a famous father.

If one has drawn a ticket in life's lottery as the son or daughter of someone famous, it is probably a good idea to go into a line of work other than that of one's famous parent. This is so because the competition against a famous parent is so unfair, the odds so stacked against the child, the chill of constant comparison so likely to freeze him up. Some, true enough, win through. But for every Pliny and Pitt the Younger there must be uncounted Plinys and Pitts the Worse and the Sadder. Some of us take a not-so-secret pleasure in learning about the failures of the children of the famous. When we hear that the great writer's daughter has had a nervous breakdown, or that the famous actress's son is a drug addict, we do a half gainer, double somersault in the dark pool of our souls. Such is the cost of fame, we conclude about these family tragedies, and it isn't worth it. And for the nonce we feel justified in our own obscurity.

Better luck, perhaps, to have been born more distantly related to someone famous. In my time I have known a nephew of the Notre Dame football coach Frank Leahy, a cousin of the television comedian Morey Amsterdam, a sister of the boxer Barney Ross—as an exercise in name-dropping, I must confess, this is pitiful—and all seemed quite pleased with their connections with the famous in their families. Their relatives' fame didn't weigh down on them, but, on the contrary, seemed to buoy them up a bit. Even remote association with the famous tends to do that for people. This is a lesson I learned fairly early in life, and I put it to use as an adolescent attempting, almost always vainly, to pick up girls in a large and now long-defunct amusement park in Chicago called Riverview. My modus operandi in those days was to ask any gaggle of girls—on behalf of my pals and myself—if they went, say, to Schurz High School. When they replied, usually rather curtly, that in fact they went to Roosevelt, I would jump in with, "Ah, then you must know my cousin, Louie Landt," who just happened to be the star of the Roosevelt High basketball team. Whatever school a group of girls claimed to go to, I claimed cousinage with that school's current

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basketball or football star. It generally worked, at least to break the ice. I accumulated a lot of broken ice, those summers of my adolescence. Such is the strange power of fame.

And such is the oddity of fame that the first thing most people who achieve it try to do with it is avoid it or, at any rate, complain about its encumbrances. One tends to think of fame in this connection with dark glasses, darting into limousines, screaming at press photographers who have gone too far, hiding away in villas on the Dalmatian coast to which the pestering bloody public cannot gain entry. Fame, in this reading, is a bed of thorns in which no one can hope to get any rest. In extreme cases, such as that of J. D. Salinger or Howard Hughes or Greta Garbo, reclusiveness is the usually unsatisfactory answer. Carried out on a grand or zany enough scale, one is only likely to become—as did Salinger, Hughes, Garbo—even more famous for wishing to avoid fame. Perhaps the desire for fame is one of those tricky wishes that one does best not to mention to your local djinn.

Others toss and roll in their fame, lapping it up, loving every minute of it. The interview, the press conference, the talk show—bring 'em on! The woman from the *New York Times* on the phone, the photographer from *People* setting up in the living room, the dork with the Minicam from the local television station ringing the door bell—hey, as they say in the beer ads, go for it! The best tables in the best restaurants, mail filled with offers and invitations, the feeling that the world really is at one's feet, such can be among the high, heady delights that accompany fame. "Where to?" a cab driver in Paris asked Herbert von Karajan. "It doesn't matter," the famous conductor is said to have replied. "They want me everywhere."

I have never come near to having been wanted everywhere, but I have from time to time been permitted to potter a bit about the purlieus where contemporary fame is manufactured. Usually in connection with books I have published, I have been interviewed by *Vogue* and *W*, I have been the subject of three dreary pages in *People*, and I was once a solo guest on the Phil Donahue Show (surely you remember, it was the same splendid week that he had the trans-sexuals and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar). I tell you this to establish that I am a man who has had his foot past the bordello door. Didn't much like it in there, I have to confess. The air was fetid with fraudulence. Taking part in an exercise so essentially phony depressed me.

As for the exercise itself, it might be called Killing Time and Filling Space. Or so at least I thought of my job a number of years ago when, on a tour to promote a book, I visited seven cities in six days, gassing away on various radio and television talk shows and lending the details of my private life for eight or nine newspaper feature stories about me. Not long afterward, on television before an audience of I don't know how many millions, I gazed deep into the blue eyes of Phil Donahue to discover that they resembled the city of Oakland in Gertrude Stein's youth in that there was "no there there." Did I, as a result of these efforts at self-promotion, become famous? Not very. Did I at least sell vast quantities of my book? Not many. Still, I like to look fondly back upon that time and think of all the friendships I didn't make.

"Do you know me?" ran the tag line from an American Express television commercial. Whenever it played on my television set, I found myself muttering in response, "No, sir, nor do I wish to." I always thought that the advertising agency that staged those commercials missed a fine opportunity by not having the man who says "Do you know me?" turn out to be Martin Bormann, or Josef Mengele, or some other still-at-large mad, serial killer in California, but then those ad boys do tend to play it safe.

If I were in such a commercial, I should like my own tag line to be, "You probably don't know me, and, if it is all the same to you, why don't we just leave it that way." By which I mean that, however passionate the hunger for fame on the part of writers, it is doubtless best that they not be too well known. Although there have been writers of great celebrity in America, from Mark Twain through Ernest Hemingway to Truman Capote, and although toward the end of his life Leo Tolstoy may have been the most famous man in Russia, as a general rule it is better that writers be observers but not observed, as close to ringside as they can get but not themselves in the ring. Yet writers may hunger more for fame

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than other artists do because, first, people do not see them performing their art, as they do dancers and musicians, and, second, writers do not see their audience actually enjoying their work, as do painters and actors and composers. Only once have I seen a stranger reading something I had written; this happened on a New York subway where a woman standing alongside me was reading an essay I had in the current month's issue of *Harper's*. It was all that I could do not to tell her that I was the author of the essay she was reading. I surely would have done so had she not read with so clearly disapproving a look upon her face that my taking a bow just then seemed a serious error.

"You probably don't know me, and it is driving me nuts" is another view of fame, and one that tends to be held by people who have had fame, took much delight in it, and now sense it is leaving them. I have a friend who until recently was a member of the City Council in Chicago; he is a man with strong opinions, which he expresses well. Because for the better part of his time on the council he was in opposition to the faction in power, he was frequently called upon to criticize the mayor on the six and ten o'clock news shows. This has made him locally famous; in Chicago his has become a household face. I hope he will not mind my saying that he rather enjoys this fame. I note that whenever we enter a restaurant or other public place, he checks the room to see if he is recognized. He usually is. A waiter or the owners of the restaurant or a customer will ask him if he isn't the fellow they suspect he is. Although he is not made rapturously happy by this, it is plain that he is pleased to be recognized. He has not made anywhere near as much money in politics as he could have made as a lawyer, and he may well view such fame as he has earned as a sufficient substitute (psychic) income, which seems to me fair enough.

But should he stay out of politics, and hence out of television camera range, his local fame—the political consultants, I believe, call it his "recognition factor"—will no doubt quickly diminish. In a year, people will strain to recall his name; in eighteen months he may well be taken for a weekend weatherman; in two years—oblivion. I remember reading a journalist's account of going into the Sans Souci restaurant in Washington, D.C., with a man who had only a few years before left a job as a chief political correspondent with one of the major networks. The Sans Souci was then said to be the favorite restaurant of Henry Kissinger—this was late in the second Nixon administration—and hence a politically potent place. The former network correspondent checked the room and, the journalist recounted, no one in the joint recognized him—and it was as if someone had poured machine oil over the food. Those who live by the kind of large, lumpish fame made possible only by the television camera often die without it.

Not everyone is so piggish in his appetite for fame as to require it in the heavy portions dispensed by television. I not long ago visited an old friend awaiting surgery in a once grand but now slightly dilapidated Jewish hospital—"Kings have lain here," wrote Karl Shapiro of such an institution, "And fabulous small Jews / And actresses whose legs were always news"—and noted countless memorial plaques. Every wing, section, surgical theater, waiting room, patient room, elevator—everything, in short, but the ashtrays, urinals, and toilets was dedicated to the memory of someone or other. Some donated money to memorialize parents or dead children; others doubtless left money behind in their wills to memorialize themselves. You can't take your money with you into death, but you can leave enough behind to allow the memory of yourself to linger awhile. In his autobiography, Irving Howe tells that Abram Sacher, then president of Brandeis, used to tell potential donors to the university the story of the Widener family giving money to Harvard to honor the memory of their son Henry, who went down with the *Titanic*, so that today students at Harvard rarely say "Let's go to the library" but instead say "Let's go to Widener." Howe writes: "A hush fell across the room. One could almost see quivers of emotion journeying from soul to soul, as if the assembled manufacturers and real estate men were ruminating, 'Someday maybe they'll say, "Let's go to Shapiro!" ' "

To have a major university library named after you, to be recognized in a fashionable

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restaurant, to have a plaque bearing your name in the elevator of a fading hospital, to have a local bartender know your drink—obviously, there are degrees of fame, yet no clear measure to gauge it. When the bill was presented from Père-Lachaise cemetery for burying Balzac, whose entire life was a struggle for fame, the great writer's name was spelled "Balsaque." (Surely there is a moral there somewhere.) I have always been partial to the definition of fame that holds you are only famous when someone who is crazy imagines he is you. I tried to remember who said that, and when I finally found it in *The Viking Book of Aphorisms,* I discovered that it was that prolific author who goes by the name of Anonymous. (Can there by a moral here, too?)

Thirty or so years ago, one might have argued that fame was being on the cover of *Time,* but now that is no longer true, nor does being on the cover of any magazine, or the subject of an ornate scandal, or the winner of honors and prizes. All these things, it is now commonly understood, render one a celebrity, and celebrity, it is also understood, is seasonal. In medicine, in fashion, in art, Proust once remarked, "there must be new names." That one of the new names this week, or month, or year happens to be yours shouldn't be taken too seriously.

Yet, as is not quite the case with money and power, the only people who can authoritatively dismiss fame are those who either have it or have walked away from a solid opportunity for attaining it. As coolheaded a man as Spinoza said he thought that those who cried out most loudly against fame were probably themselves most desirous of it. In order to despise fame properly one really must have it, and being in the superior position of despising it may even be worth the effort of achieving it. I wouldn't know; I would, however, like to know.

Everyone who writes, I have no doubt, would like to be famous, and not only famous now, while on this earth, but, embarrassing enough to admit given the odds, famous after he has departed the earth. And this, I believe, is true of serious and frivolous writers alike. All of us would like to have said about us what I heard a eulogist say of the songwriter Yip Yarborough: "He is survived by his words." A certain absurdity is built into this desire, to be sure, and this is that death presents at least three distinct possibilities—heaven, hell, or sheer oblivion—none of which is a condition likely to be improved upon by posthumous fame. Still, every writer likes to think that posterity will take his proper measure, which also means that he hopes posterity will esteem him as he wishes to be esteemed. Given the general level of vanity among writers, it is fair to say that contemporary society has not arrived at the stage of development where this is possible.

Yet there is a serious distinction between wanting fame and wanting recognition for one's accomplishments. Edward Gibbon, for example, upon completion of his great history, noted: "I will not dissemble the firm emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame." As is now known, about Gibbons's fame there was no "perhaps" whatsoever. Gibbons's fame arrived on schedule, remained, lived after him, endures today more than two centuries later, and, based on solid achievement as it is, is entirely deserved. Without such fame, based on true accomplishment, there can be no tradition, no worthy models, no passing on of high achievement across generations and down through centuries. In this sense fame is no trivial matter.

It sometimes seems as if fame is all a writer can think about—his reputation, his ranking among other writers, and the rest of it—and yet it is probably the worst thing for him to think about. To think about posthumous fame is still worse. As soon as he begins to direct his writing to future generations, it is almost certain to become portentous and empty. As soon as he begins to think of his own fame in comparison with that of his contemporaries, his mood figures to turn rivalrous and mean. Fame, for a writer, is very difficult to control. If he writes too little, his fame is endangered; if he writes too much, it is also endangered. The appetite for money or power can be slaked; I at any rate have seen people once quite mad for money or power be calmed after they had achieved an ample portion of either. I cannot say the same for those with a strong taste for fame. "La gloire et le repos sont choses qui ne peuvent loger en même gîte,"

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wrote Montaigne, which I should loosely translate, "You want fame, kid, kiss tranquility good-bye."

In a certain kind of stupid, falsely sincere television interview, there comes a moment toward the end when the interviewer leans in and, in a serious and intimate tone of voice, asks, "How do you wish to be remembered?" To which the person being interviewed usually responds, "As a person who always cared deeply for quality," or "As a good parent to my children," or "For my work with animal shelters," or some such self-congratulatory lie. To the question "How do you wish to be remembered?" my own, simpler answer is, "For as long as possible."

Transactions

MARTIN RYAN

Everybody pays
For everything,
The immutable
Law of life.
Terms differ
Notes get extended,
Some seem never
To come due
But they do.
All the old notions
Of reckoning are true.

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Learned Hand and the Great Train Ride

FREDERIC R. KELLOGG

IN 1909 PRESIDENT WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT appointed Learned Hand to the United States District Court for New York, making Hand, at thirty-seven, one of the youngest men ever appointed a federal judge. It has been said that Hand's uncharacteristically brash decision in 1910 to support Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose challenge to the very president who had appointed him a federal judge was the major reason why Learned Hand was never promoted to membership on the Supreme Court. ("We had to break away from the Hanna thing—the control of the nation by big business," Hand commented in retrospect.) Although this was virtually his only involvement in politics, it may indeed have been costly, for Taft, it will be recalled, went from the presidency to the chief justiceship, and would long remain a fixture among the inner circle of the Republicans, the party of the elephant, who seldom forget.

Near the end of Hand's life, Judge Charles E. Wyzanski, Jr., described him as "universally acknowledged as the greatest living judge in the English-speaking world." But never having gained the judicial pinnacle of the highest court in the land, from which his thoughts would have taken on the added luster of the authority of that institution, Learned Hand securely holds the position in the history of the American judiciary of the greatest judge never appointed to the Supreme Court. Of what did his greatness consist? And why does Hand remain, alone among federal judges below the level of the Supreme Court, the most often quoted, the best remembered, the most honored of legal thinkers?

A great intelligence is often remembered not only for settling opinion, but, through redefining the terms of inquiry in a manner that raises profound questions, for unsettling it. For the more than fifty years that Learned Hand sat as a federal trial and appellate judge, his renown

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derived from the care, brilliance, eloquence, and craftsmanship that he brought to judicial rule-making. Like few others who have sat on the federal circuit courts of appeal, Hand has had an enormous influence on the form and direction of federal case law. In this he was easily more a settler—and a master settler—of opinion than a disturber of it. Yet in the final analysis, a far greater influence may yet come through Hand's role as a disturber of legal opinion, where his effect, even to this day, continues to haunt the most penetrating lawyers and judges and legal scholars in their efforts to restore the theory of constitutional law to something resembling the state in which it existed before Hand so profoundly shook it.

Billings Learned Hand was born in Albany, New York, on January 27, 1872, into a distinguished legal family. His father, Samuel, and his grandfather Augustus were prominent lawyers and judges in upstate New York, where both were active in politics; his older cousin Augustus, his closest boyhood friend, later joined Hand on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in Manhattan. Called "B" by friends and "Bunny" by his family, Hand went to private school in Albany. After graduating summa cum laude from Harvard, where he concentrated on philosophy, and from the Harvard Law School, where he was editor of the *Law Review*, he began practicing law in Albany, which he didn't much like. He moved to New York City shortly after marrying Frances Fincke in 1902. Two law firms and seven years later, he was appointed a federal judge.

Hand was a short but nonetheless imposing figure with broad shoulders and ample bushy eyebrows and a reputation for scrupulous honesty. He had three daughters and delighted in his grandchildren. The writer Frank Conroy, who became a member of Hand's extended family when he married one of his granddaughters, recalls Hand's talking to him as teacher to student about the complexity of the law as a human enterprise, a set of often intractable problems for which ideas were at best tools but never answers. Occasionally, in the middle of these discussions, Hand's bad back would act up and he would lie down on the floor, not missing a beat, eyes upward, continuing his discourse on the complexity of the law.

Although Hand's reputation was built on his extraordinary ability to settle legal problems, perhaps the most crucial single venture of his distinguished career was an unsettling one. It came when he was eighty-six years old, three years before his death, in the form of the 1958 Oliver Wendell Holmes Lectures at the Harvard Law School, which later appeared as a book under the title *The Bill of Rights*. In these lectures, Hand delivered so strong an attack on judicial review under the

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Constitution that one of his earlier law clerks actually thought that advanced age had badly affected Hand's judgment. Perhaps the ex-clerk held Hand's own contribution to first amendment law too highly—and it was among his many distinguished and lasting contributions to judicial rule-making—to regard him as an aging bull in a legal china shop, crashing about destroying the products he had himself done so much to help create.

Hand's *Bill of Rights* set off a round of anguished reassessment among legal scholars that has not yet died out, but has become even more pertinent in the recent debates swirling around the re-examination of the Constitution and the radical questioning of the enormous power wielded by the Supreme Court since the 1950s. Here Hand, the master guide and reliable illuminator of complex legal issues, whose "microscope was so powerful and his focus so accurate that he could see in the slide before him shadings that had altogether escaped the attention of lesser men" (in the words of Judge Henry Friendly), left his mark not as teacher or guide but as a powerful oracle of misgivings: the Constitution, according to *The Bill of Rights*, was to be regarded primarily as the embodiment of a historical compromise, not a set of durable principles or a resource from which to strengthen or modify the morals of society. The notion of a constitutional law of economic or personal rights knowable by judges, Learned Hand maintained at the close of his career, was a fallacy.

The controversy over the questions put forth in Hand's Holmes lectures of 1958 is far from having been settled today in 1987. The leading exponents of constitutional theory, such as Herbert Wechsler (whose theory of "neutral principles" was conceived as a response to Hand's *Bill of Rights*), the debate between legal scholars espousing "principle orientation" and those espousing "interest balancing" as leading modes of interpreting the Constitution, and the writings of such major theorists of fundamental law as Lon Fuller, the late Alexander Bickel, John Hart Ely, and Ronald Dworkin—all have failed to lead to any widely agreed upon explanation of where judges may derive meaning in interpreting broad constitutional language, particularly in cases involving the due process clauses of the fifth and fourteenth amendments, which proscribe deprivations of life, liberty, or property without "due process of law."

Ironically, the year of the bicentennial of the United States Constitution has arrived with constitutional theory in greater disarray than at any other time in our nation's history since *Marbury v. Madison* (1803). Moreover, the two most outspoken criticisms of judicial review now come from quite opposite ends of the political spectrum. The conservative criticism, which began more than a generation ago with attacks on judicial policy-making under such vague criteria as "strict construction,"

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has since produced the notion of restricting judicial decisions to "the original intent" of the framers of the Constitution—a view sufficiently respectable for the Solicitor General of the United States, Charles Fried, on leave from the faculty of the Harvard Law School, to defend it in a speech at Harvard's 350th anniversary. With him on the platform on that occasion to advance an alternative and drastically different view was Mark V. Tushnet, a leading theorist of the radical movement known as "critical legal studies," which started within the Harvard law faculty and has since spread nationwide.

Both viewpoints, conservative and radical, have largely focused their energies on denigrating other theories of judicial review, and so have contributed relatively little to understanding the perplexing issues faced by contemporary federal courts. "Original intent" harks back to the classical dogma that the law must be found, not made. Of this view, John Chipman Gray, an American scholar who influenced Learned Hand, observed in 1909, "What was the Law in the time of Richard Coeur de Lion on the liability of a telegraph company to the persons to whom a message was sent?" Paraphrasing, we might today ask, What was the intent of the framers as to the constitutionality of televising a criminal trial? Critical legal scholarship, on the other hand, denies that there is *any* resource to which judges may turn, since they hold constitutional language to be essentially indeterminate, and hence all decisions to be inherently political. This leads to a dilemma best captured by Tushnet in his debate with Fried, when he remarked that constitutional review is necessary, but impossible, for drawing meaning from the Constitution is a myth.

Both conservative and radical viewpoints, advanced with little note of Learned Hand's writings, share an assumption with the "mainstream" views that they criticize, which Hand would have questioned: that having provided jurisdiction, the Constitution must also provide a theory, or we must provide one for it. This assumption is deeply ingrained in legal thought: Wechsler made it in advancing his axiom that decisions must be based only on "reasons that in their generality and neutrality transcend any immediate result that is involved." Bickel sought at first to defend this position, but his own insights eventually caused him to pick it apart. Fuller sought to discover a source of meaning in the "minimum content" of a substantive "natural law." Dworkin has defended the necessity of basing decisions on overriding "rights." Ely has proposed interpreting the Constitution according to an implicit theory of the democratic process.

All of these views have in common the notion that constitutional cases cannot be decided unless they are guided by a formula, philoso-

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phy, or Weltanschauung of some kind. Nor do the criticisms from either right or left, if we examine them carefully, effectively challenge that assumption; those for the right want to substitute their own conservative principles, while the "crits," as the critical legal studies camp is known, assuming that political self-interest is inevitable, simply ask them to admit it. All three groups of commentators, right, left, and center, assume that the undertaking requires a form of certainty—the need for a guiding formula, pattern, or paradigm—which Hand denied was possible.

The common assumption that Hand did not accept in his 1958 lectures is that constitutional jurisdiction is self-explanatory. The fact that there is federal jurisdiction under the Bill of Rights does not mean we have to find, or provide, a theory to explain it; when we attempt to do so, he held, we lose sight of the fact that jurisdiction is a historical, not a philosophical, fact. Jurisdiction itself, as understood in the common-law tradition, is a limited power to inquire and decide individual cases on their peculiar facts. If we lose sight of this, Hand believed, we risk turning the judiciary loose to make law wherever the broad language conceivably applies, and in rationalizing such decisions by the criterion of constitutional "rights," we shut out vast areas of public policy from legislative control—especially if we assume, as Hand did not, that the judiciary should unequivocally be given the last word.

Hand's 1958 lectures were not an aberration from his previous legal thought but the result of an underlying philosophy that has deep roots in this country. It is also a philosophy whose assumptions Hand shared in large part with Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. That philosophy is pragmatism, which Hand absorbed in the Harvard philosophy department during the era of William James, Josiah Royce, and George Santayana. Holmes, for whom Hand had an almost reverential admiration, was present at the creation of philosophical pragmatism, having engaged in early discussions with James, Chauncey Wright, Charles Sanders Peirce, and others in Cambridge just after the Civil War in the group, that somewhat irreverently called itself the "Metaphysical Club."

It is generally accepted that in the discussions among members of the Metaphysical Club an original approach to philosophy came into being, an approach that Peirce was the first to call pragmatism. Max Fisch, the dean of Peirce scholars, suggested in 1942 that Holmes shaped Peirce's own thought in this line through his inclination to orient the definition of law toward its future consequences. In fact, more than half the early members of the Metaphysical Club were lawyers. They were immersed in legal tradition and convinced of its bearing on philosophy. Several prominent aspects of the method through which meaning is derived in

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the common law found their way into pragmatic philosophy: the limitation of concepts to the particular experience (or "precedents") for which they stand; the notion of experimental and instrumental abstraction, which held that rules, and indeed all laws, are "hypotheses" to be tested against future experience; and the Peircean idea that all generals or universals are unsettled, which has a direct parallel to Holmes's view of legal rule-making by the process that, in 1870, he called "successive approximation."

The lessons that Hand and Holmes took from the tradition of pragmatism were at once epistemological—about, that is, how we may know the law—and ontological—about what the law actually is—and both were directed at the importance of comprehending *uncertainty*. Hand and Holmes have suffered from popular descriptions of their respect for uncertainty as "skepticism" and "relativism." Reaching deep into the writings of the early pragmatists—Wright, Peirce, James, Holmes himself, later John Dewey—one finds that what passed in Hand's writing for skepticism and relativism was simply a more vivid and lucid sense of the uncertainty of general knowledge, which the pragmatic philosophers before him had sought to measure with as much exactness as language would permit. In doing so, they found that language itself got in the way—an inherent impossibility of measurement, as if there were a Heisenberg uncertainty principle to philosophy itself. While the Heisenberg principle focuses on the necessity inherent in quantum mechanics of approximating the present moment, Hand and Holmes emphasized the necessity in civil rule-making of approximating the future. In both cases, physics and law, error was caused by the assumption that the means of evaluation did not affect the thing evaluated.

The law uses general concepts in the determination of case-specific liability and in the explanation of each decision as a precedent for the future. In the choice of concept, and its expression, lies the area of danger and miscalculation for judges. Although rules were bets against the future, the law persists in using the language of rights. "All rights tend to declare themselves absolute to their logical extreme," wrote Holmes in 1908. "Yet all in fact are limited by the neighborhood of principles of policy which are other than those on which the particular right is founded, and which become strong enough to hold their own when a certain point is reached." The more general the concept, Holmes believed, the more likely it was that judges would infuse it with meaning drawn from their own personal and political views, creating an absolute "right" and thereby predetermining the future in vast areas of policy as yet unexplored in detail.

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Hence the "uncertainty principle" of Hand and Holmes—which holds that the use of general propositions at once closes off inquiry into yet unexperienced circumstances—had an affirmative message not to be found in either relativism or skepticism: in the interest of truth, it demanded avoidance of language imparting universal applicability to propositions drawn around a limited sphere of experience. But more than this, by insisting on the limitation of legal concepts, it also limited the presumptive domain of law and legal sanctions. In this sense, pragmatic legal philosophy was fundamentally libertarian, and much more so than the positivist tradition that had dominated Anglo-American jurisprudence.

The British positivist jurisprudence of Locke, Bentham, and John Austin emphasized the view that law consists of sovereign commands; it also implied a distinct concept of law as a mechanism for social control. Pragmatism shared with positivism a repudiation of a priori natural law—a fact that has led to pragmatism being seen as a brand of positivism—but pragmatism also rejected the latter's utilitarian assumptions. The positivist conception viewed law as a network of rights and duties, which reformers or social engineers could modify, and thus perfect civil society by maximizing utility. This notion utterly violated the pragmatic principle of uncertainty, which demanded that jurisprudence be rid of the utilitarian conception of law as a knowable system of logic and obligation and hence as a tool for social control. Positivism saw law as a body of rights; pragmatism saw it as a set of rules based on approximations.

All of this raises an important question underlying the current ferment over constitutional theory: does a philosophy of law, constitutional or otherwise, have to have a formula, an underlying ideology, a worldview, a bias—what Thomas Kuhn called a "paradigm"? Ronald Dworkin, also present at the Harvard 350th anniversary, said unequivocally that it *must*—that you simply cannot "do" philosophy of law or be a judge without one. Yet Dworkin had a difficult time categorizing Holmes, conceding that he is the one major thinker who came closest to actually doing *without* something resembling an ideology—but Dworkin then followed convention in writing Holmes off as a "skeptic."

Pragmatic theory did not imply that there was *no* certainty whatsoever in civil law. After 1924, Hand's own court, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, had jurisdiction over the world's leading financial center and dealt with the majority of important federal commercial litigation, much of it having national and international implications. To assist him in admiralty matters, Hand kept charts and dividers in his chambers; he was known to correct counsel in open court

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on the intimate details of offshore geodetics from memory. He knew the placement of buoys in the channel and learned the time and room necessary to maneuver a ship at nine knots in a current. In his familiarity with the precise conditions surrounding recurring detail lay the key to his expertise as a generalist. "It is the merit of the common law," Holmes had said, "that it decides the case first and determines the principle afterwards."

Along with dealing in the main with relatively concrete matters, it was also Hand's task as a judge, particularly when under the obligation of resolving conflicts among discrete governmental bodies and their various branches and of determining the limits on their authority, to interpret the legal implications of sweeping constitutional concepts. Here the uncertainty factor reached its highest power and, as Justice Frankfurter observed, Hand sought to deal with such matters accordingly:

> When considerations of such magnitude influence if they do not underlie the accommodations that determine important adjudications, it is not surprising that on occasion we find in Learned Hand, as in Holmes, a certain vagueness of formulation and a penumbral scope to decisions. This is a manifestation of clarity of thought. It is the kind of clarity, which, in Professor Whitehead's phrase, "leaves the darkness unobscured."

The impression is of a Heisenberg principle metaphorically turned upside down, wherein uncertainty increases at larger, rather than more infinitesimal, magnitudes. But then this only reflects the inherent necessity of legal discourse to bear upon our unknown and unlimited future—not upon our attempts to increase the precision of control over our natural environment.

If a profound recognition of the uncertainty inherent in much legal discourse characterizes Judge Hand's philosophy, how, then, could he have been so surpassingly successful as an appellate judge? Had he been a skeptic in any profound sense, it would seem that rule-making would have been anathema to him. Implicit in that attitude, which indeed encompasses the views of all of the principal legal theorists today—Dworkin, the conservatives, the "crits"—is the notion that judges simply cannot decide any case without a general formula or paradigm, explicit or implicit. As we shall see, Hand had no final paradigm, but the philosophy he shared with Holmes led him toward a high regard for the value of free discourse—higher even than it did for Holmes.

Fortunately, the historical record has left many illustrations of Judge Hand's legal and constitutional philosophy, of which by far the most prominent and well documented, in both action and reflection, is his

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application of the first amendment guarantee of free expression to prosecutions under federal national security legislation during and after the worldwide conflicts earlier in the century. In interpreting the first amendment we have the unique benefit of Hand's personal correspondence with Holmes and others on the subject, published and elucidated by Professor Gerald Gunther. The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Professor Gunther, who is in the final stages of preparing the authorized biography of Learned Hand, and who published in the Stanford Law Review in 1975 an analysis of Hand's influence on Holmes and the development of modern first amendment law, which is filled with insight and immensely helpful to anyone who considers this subject.

Hand was a forty-five-year-old federal district judge in 1917 when he was confronted with a trial under the newly enacted Espionage Act, which among other things prohibited the mailing of publications that "willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States." Shortly after passage of this act, the federal government sought to prohibit the mailing of the forthcoming issue of Max Eastman's "monthly revolutionary journal," *The Masses*, which had a circulation of roughly twenty thousand. The issue, heavily laden with Eastman's general views on the need for social and economic reorganization in the United States, unequivocally opposed American involvement in World War I. The government justified its application of the statute with the argument that "to arouse discontent and disaffection among the people with the prosecution of the war and with the draft tends to promote a mutinous and insubordinate temper among the troops." In a move that was considered quite out of keeping with the legal and popular temper of the time, Hand enjoined the government's action.

Less than two years later, in early 1919, Holmes would write the opinion of the Supreme Court in *Schenck v. United States*, upholding the criminal conviction of Charles T. Schenck, general secretary of the Socialist Party, for conspiracy to violate the Espionage Act by mailing fifteen thousand circulars to men who had been called and accepted for military service. The circular, drawing on socialist doctrine, inveighed against conscription, called it unconstitutional, and beseeched, "Do not submit to intimidation." But the discussion, as Holmes conceded, "in form at least confined itself to peaceful measures such as repeal of the Act."

The principal constitutional argument in defense of Schenck was that the explicit words used were protected: two of the strongest expressions in his circular were said to be quoted from "well-known public men." To this Holmes memorably replied:

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We admit that in many places and in ordinary times the defendants in saying all that was said in the circular would have been within their constitutional rights. But the character of every act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done. The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic. . . . The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.

Thus was born the "clear and present danger" test, and, be it noted, in a case supporting, not overruling, punishment for speech.

On June 19, 1918, seven months before the *Schenck* case would be argued before the Supreme Court, Hand was on his way by train to his summer home in Cornish, New Hampshire, when he met and chanced to share the long train ride in discussion with Justice Holmes, thirty-one years his senior, also northward bound and headed for his summer house in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, at the end of the Supreme Court term. Hand had recently decided the *Masses* case and had had his decision overruled in favor of the government by the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. He had espoused a more "objective" test than Holmes would adopt in *Schenck*, and he looked to the literal words of the alleged obstruction (as the *Schenck* defense later vainly urged the Supreme Court to do). Hand subsequently wrote that his position "seemed to meet with practically no professional approval whatever," and in June 1918 he found himself in disagreement with Holmes over a fundamental issue.

Soon after the train ride, on June 22, Hand wrote to Holmes:

Dear Mr. Justice

I gave up more easily than I now feel disposed about Tolerance on Wednesday. Here I take my stand. Opinions are at best provisional hypotheses, incompletely tested. The more they are tested, after the tests are well scrutinized, the more assurance we may assume, but they are never absolutes. So we must be tolerant of opposite opinions or varying opinions by the very fact of our incredulity of our own. . . .

You say that I strike at the sacred right to kill the other fellow when he disagrees. The horrible possibility silenced me when you said it. Now, I say, "Not at all, kill him for the love of Christ and in the name of God, but always realize that he may be the saint and you the devil. Go your way with a strong arm and a swift shining sword, in full consciousness that what you kill for, and what you

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may die for, some smart chap like Laski may write a book and prove is all nonsense." . . .

I sat under the Bo Tree and these truths were revealed to me. Tolerance is the twin of Incredulity, but there is no inconsistency in cutting off the heads of as many as you please; that is a natural right. Only, and here we may differ, I do say that you may not cut off heads, (except for limited periods and then only when you want to very much indeed), because the victims insist upon saying things which look against Provisional Hypothesis Number Twenty-Six, the verification of which to date may be found in its proper place in the card catalogue. Generally, I insist, you must allow the possibility that if our heads are spared, other cards may be added under that sub-title which will have, perhaps, an important modification.

All this seems to me so perfectly self-evident, self-explanatory and rigidly applicable to the most complicated situations that I hesitate to linger upon it, lest I should seem tolerant of any different [*sic*] of opinion concerning it.

I greatly enjoyed my good fortune in meeting you on the train.

Faithfully yours,
Learned Hand

In a letter dated only two days later Holmes replied:

Dear Hand

Rarely does a letter hit me so exactly where I live as yours, and unless you are spoiling for a fight I agree with it throughout. My only qualification, if any, would be that free speech stands no differently than freedom from vaccination. The occasions would be rarer when you cared enough to stop it but if for any reason you did care enough you wouldn't care a damn for the suggestion that you were acting on a provisional hypothesis and might be wrong. That is the condition of every act. You tempt me to repeat an apologue that I got off to my wife in front of the statue of Garrison on Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, many years ago. I said—If I were an official person I should say nothing shall induce me to do honor to a man who broke the fundamental condition of social life by bidding the very structure of society perish rather than he not have his way—Expressed in terms of morals, to be sure, but still, his way. If I were a son of Garrison I should reply—Fool, not to see that every great reform has seemed to threaten the structure of soci-

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ety,—but that society has not perished, because man is a social animal, and with every turn falls into a new pattern like the Kaleidoscope. If I were a philosopher I should say—Fools both, not to see that you are the two blades (conservative and radical) of the shears that cut out the future. But if I were the ironical man in the back of the philosopher's head I should conclude—Greatest fool of all, Thou—not to see that man's destiny is to fight. Therefore take thy place on the one side or the other, if with the added grace of knowing that the Enemy is as good a man as thou, so much the better, but kill him if thou Canst. All of which seems in accord with you. If I may repeat another chestnut of ancient date and printed in later years—When I say a thing is true I mean that I can't help believing it—and nothing more. But as I observe that the cosmos is not always limited by my Can't Helps I don't bother about absolute truth or even inquire whether there is such a thing, but define the Truth as the system of my limitations. I may add that as other men are subject to a certain number, not all, of my Can't Helps, intercourse is possible. When I was young I used to define the truth as the majority vote of that nation that can lick all the others. So we may define the present war as an inquiry concerning truth. Of course you won't suspect me of thinking with levity on that subject because of my levitical speech. I enjoyed our meeting as much as you possibly could have and should have tried to prolong it to Boston but I feared my wife would worry.

Sincerely yours
O. W. Holmes

Holmes's letter of June 24, with its statement that "free speech stands no differently than freedom from vaccination," was not answered by Learned Hand. The two men would correspond again in early 1919, around the time of *Schenck* and subsequent rulings by the Supreme Court in the *Frohwerk* (1919) and *Debs* (1919) cases, in which Holmes continued to acquiesce in convictions under the Espionage Act as satisfying the clear and present danger test when "circumstances" provided a rationale, and this correspondence culminated in Hand's congratulations eight months later when Holmes finally opposed a conviction in his famous dissent in *Abrams v. United States*. In analyzing *Masses*, Hand had concluded at once that a clear, objective test applicable to the literal character of language was required to prevent juries from convicting in the heat of the moment—and that there would have to be a direct incitement, independent of "circumstances." Al-

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though Holmes never appreciated this, in *Abrams* he did at last appear to set free speech apart from other freedoms with the following language:

> [W]hen men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That, at any rate, is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loath and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country.

While the *Abrams* dissent resonates with the same philosophical point that Hand made to Holmes in his letter of June 22, 1918, what Holmes did in reaching this conclusion was to infuse a stronger emphasis into the element of "present" in "clear and present danger." As Hand's private correspondence reveals, Hand believed that this alone would not prevent juries from convicting for something short of the imminent threat to lawful and pressing purposes; only a standard prohibiting outright incitement to violence would serve.

The pertinent history following the great train ride shared by Hand and Holmes is filled with ironies. Such was to be the appreciation of the *Abrams* dissent among informed circles of opinion—touched with a sense of relief over the drawing at last of some limit—that Holmes's "clear and present danger" test would be enshrined by Professor Zechariah Chafee, Jr., and would (for a while at any rate) occupy a dominant place in first amendment doctrine. Yet after World War II, when the courts returned to the investigation and prosecution of suspected Communist party members under the Smith Act, the limit that it only intimated turned out to provide more confusion than protection.

Hand, as chief judge of a respected but subordinate court, having had his *Masses* doctrine rejected on appeal, thenceforth dutifully followed Supreme Court precedent, eventually doing his best to refine and clarify the "clear and present danger" test in a 1951 decision, *Dennis v. United States* ("whether the gravity of the evil, discounted by its improbability, justifies such invasion of free speech as is necessary to avoid the danger"). For his pains Hand was strongly criticized for seemingly having promoted a "balancing" test, as opposed to one drawn from "principle." This same debate was joined between Justice Hugo Black,

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who saw the first amendment as an absolute, and Justice Felix Frankfurter, who gave great deference to legislative purposes. The debate continued in other areas of constitutional doctrine long after Hand's death.

Later, however, history vindicated Hand's original position. As is sometimes the case when a controversy refuses to rest, a discrete point of greatest friction is exposed by persistent and skillful advocacy. In this instance the point was the same point on which Learned Hand's mind had quickly pounced in 1917, and it was put before the Supreme Court forty years later in arguments honed and sharpened by continued resistance to prosecutions under the Smith Act. The defendants in *Yates v. United States* (1957) had challenged the trial court's instructions to the jury—perhaps the only procedure through which to raise this fine point—for failure to provide adequate guidance on the distinction between expounding abstractions and advocating action. The government replied that "the true constitutional dividing line is not between inciting and abstract advocacy of forcible overthrow [of government], but rather between advocacy as such, irrespective of its inciting qualities, and the mere discussion or exposition of violent overthrow as an abstract theory." The issue was explicitly joined.

Justice John Marshall Harlan, writing for a large majority (only Justice Thomas C. Clark dissented), rejected the government's position, finding that the jury instructions had ignored "any issue as to the character of the advocacy in terms of its capacity to stir listeners to forcible action." Intent alone was not enough, and to be unlawful the speech must have urged *illegal* conduct: "Vague references to 'revolutionary' or 'militant' action of an unspecified character, which are found in the evidence, might in addition be given too great weight by the jury in the absence of more precise instructions." This opinion, and those such as *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969) that built upon it, demonstrate that Hand's *Masses* doctrine has substantially prevailed.

It has apparently prevailed, we must add the qualification, in this country. Over much of the remainder of the world it would hardly be given any serious thought, even were there a formal, public forum of review sufficiently endowed—like our Supreme Court—to elucidate the advocacy/incitement distinction and implement it. But Judge Hand would be the first to deny that there is any inherent content in the first amendment necessitating such a distinction. He himself was drawn to it more from a trained sense of the imperfections of the jury trial—the zeal and resources of the prosecutor considered against the impressionable reactions of a jury—and the likely effect on political discourse from convictions based in part on anomalous "circumstances."

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As philosophers, Hand and Holmes were close; both shared the view that no model of reality should be finally enshrined for all time. It is fair to say that Hand's exposition of the value of free expression, as set forth in his first letter to Holmes, is admirably restated in Holmes's *Abrams* dissent. But Holmes had never sat as a regular trial judge, and he was therefore not so clearly cognizant as Hand that juries do not discuss philosophy, much less attempt to apply it, in their deliberations. Perhaps Holmes could have been moved toward an objective *Masses*-type test, had he lived another generation. But he was born into an era of armed conflict of a scale greater than anything we have recently known.

It might be said that Holmes and Hand, rather than being innocent of importing their own worldview, simply adopted a modified social Darwinism, in which the struggle to survive provided the dominant context for their legal thinking. But this is simplistic and ignores the fact that Holmes himself cut short even that form of reading social theory into law with his famous dissent in *Lochner v. New York* (1905), wherein the Court struck down state regulation of working hours as violating a laissez-faire view of free contract, with the comment, "The Fourteenth Amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*." For those who believe that all thinking is paradigmatic, the most that can be alleged of a Hand/Holmes paradigm is that it was a paradigm against paradigms, an anti-paradigm.

Indeed, such was the respect for uncertainty of Hand and Holmes's shared vision of reality that it carried within it the prospect of its own error, failure, even demise. It was not a vision of utopia upon which their republic had been founded, but one of experiment, with a sense that nothing, however profoundly important, could be absolutely certain, and certainly not part of the permanent legal or constitutional substructure.

So what, then, was the use of the Constitution, and how did it protect something so fundamental as freedom of expression? What it did was not altogether that much different from what the common law had already done in numerous contexts throughout centuries of experiment with free and private institutions in England: it focused the inquiry, it forced the question, repeatedly. This is what is meant by first amendment jurisdiction: it asks whether the public purpose is consistent with free expression in a continuing succession of urgent but particular controversies, in which the stakes are high and all are held to account; and it has asked it relentlessly. Answers gradually have come out, but they were and are not final. "Clear and present danger" now plays a subordinate role in first amendment rule-making; the objective test does not address every situation. The answers have not come from any inherent content in the document, or from patent logical inconsistencies between congressional

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and constitutional language; they have arisen from the specific exigencies of maintaining a democracy through world war, and from there on into a risky and uncertain future.

In the largest sense, the objective test for first amendment cases in the national security area is itself an experiment, which is to say a choice, a decision. We've taken it; it is not perfect, and perhaps it's wrong—in the sense that only a nation willing to ignore the distinction between advocacy and direct incitement can survive a century as recklessly cruel and complex as this one. Holmes may have thought so, and to this sentiment we can hear the echo of Hand's original response: "The horrible possibility silenced me when you said it. Now, I say, 'Not at all, kill him for the love of Christ and in the name of God, but always realize that he may be the saint and you the devil.' "

There is, after all, another century coming, and we have nearly survived this one. Looking back, who is to say that the real tragedy of the twentieth century—the killing of tens of millions of innocent men and women—cannot be traced to the very engine Judge Hand had in mind when he responded to Holmes about the righteous certainty of devils who thought they were saints. It was this form of righteousness that Hand sought to undermine when he drew the line in *Masses*. If Hand was right about this, it follows that such killing could not have taken place, and cannot recommence, without the illusion of certainty. It is a kind of certainty that we, in the United States, having had the question forced on us by our Constitution, and the choice proposed by Learned Hand, have chosen to unmask, so leaving the darkness unobscured.

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Present at the Creation

Professional Football in the Twenties

ERNEST L. CUNEO

HIGH ON MOUNT MARCY in the Adirondacks is a tiny lake called the Tear of the Clouds. Few would imagine that it is the source of the lordly Hudson. In 1921, fewer still could have conceived that the forlorn professional football team of a small Wisconsin town—flat broke after expending $500 for the season from its sponsor, the Acme Packing Company—would one day become the professional football franchise known as the Green Bay Packers. For the whole 1921 season, the employee-players received their share of the pot—exactly $16.50 each. The team's indomitable leader, Curly Lambeau, thereupon offered the townsfolk one share of stock and a season ticket for $5.00. Five thousand dollars was raised. That bought the birth certificate of the Green Bay Packers. The twentieth century rolled on. In 1986, the Green Bay Packers' player payroll was $11.7 million. The gross earnings of the team were more than $27 million. Four hundred and fifty thousand people had crowded into the appropriately named Lambeau Stadium. The average price for one seat for one game was $14.50—just $2.00 less than the pro player of yore received for the entire season.

Far up in northwestern Minnesota is little Lake Itasca. It would take the mystical insight of a Hiawatha to discern that it is the headwaters of the mighty Mississippi. Similarly, it would have taken the crystal ball of a Merlin to discern that the team fielded in 1920 by the Staley Starch Company of Decatur, Illinois, the Decatur Staleys, would emerge as the Chicago Bears. This metamorphosis was the result of the wide-visioned, closefisted George Halas, the player-coach whose dynamic faith and relentless pigheadedness brought professional football out of the purgatory shadows of opprobrium and paltry gate receipts to the Elysian fields of Super Bowl acclaim—and a near billion-dollar-a-year National Football League income.

George (Papa) Halas is justly regarded as the George Washington of

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pro football. His total bankroll when he started in 1920 was $5,000. When he died in 1983, he was the principal owner of the Chicago Bears, which had a market value of not less than $70 million—which is now probably even more astronomical since the Chicago Bears won the 1985 Super Bowl. Traditionally and unswervingly, rich or poor, however, Halas paid as little as he could for top talent. In 1984, out of twenty-eight teams, the Bears were twenty-second in player payroll payments. He never forgot the days when the payroll had to be paid from the dicey box-office receipts. In the Depression, Halas cut the $5,000 salary of Bronko Nagurski, one of the great players of all time, to $4,500. His players wryly declared that George tossed around half-dollars as if they were manhole covers. Nevertheless, his pertinacity and sagacity paid off not only for him but for all of professional football.

The most unlikely place of origination, however, was an ill-tended, all-purpose playing field behind the stately, if slightly rundown clapboard Victorian clubhouse of the Knights of Columbus in Orange, New Jersey. In 1928 this was the home field of the Orange Tornadoes. The rickety, weather-beaten wooden stands that lined one side of the field sagged under the weight of a few thousand blue-collar fans and the financial burden of carrying a National Football League franchise.

For four years the Tornadoes held out as stubbornly as the defenders of the Alamo. When, at last, the Orange Tornadoes went down, the franchise moved to Boston where, as the Boston Bulldogs, their mangy existence came to an inglorious end caused by hypothermia of the box office. But, lo and behold, the franchise rose from the dead at the behest of a miraculous showman by the name of George Preston Marshall. Owner of a chain of superior laundries, George (Long Live Linen) Marshall bought the franchise, transported it to Washington, and with fanfare and ceremony rechristened the born-again team the Washington Redskins, with the appropriate royal colors of burgundy and gold. A hell of a lot of water has flowed down the Potomac since then. Similarly, the $2,500 gate of the Orange Tornadoes franchise has swelled into a mighty tide of fans and dollars that will inundate the 52,000-seat RFK Stadium for years to come, with 15,000 disconsolate folks on a waiting list, wailing for the privilege of purchasing a season ticket. As a former Orange Tornado, I can testify that none of us, trotting around the sandlot field in New Jersey, ever imagined that the franchise would one day gross $24 million and, even more incredible, easily support a $10,600,000 payroll. It wouldn't have made much difference if we had. It was years before that kind of money was in the wood.

The twenties were the wild frontier days of professional football. Franchises in those days resembled homestead claims; anybody with a

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few dollars could start a "club," and a lot of local businessmen did. The forerunner of the National Football League was the American Football Association. In September 1920, a number of tightfisted club representatives met in the Akron showroom of the Hupmobile Agency to form the American Professional Football Association. The principal teams were the Decatur Staleys, the Canton Bulldogs, the Akron Pros, the Dayton Triangles, the Cleveland Tigers, the Rock Island Independents, the Chicago Cardinals, the Muncie Flyers, and the Rochester Jeffersonians.

As an index to the Association's precarious financial status, the dues for belonging were $100. No one ever paid it. In 1922, when the American Football Association became the National Football League, its franchises were fixed at $2,500. Tim Mara of the New York Giants is the only one known to have paid it, not on its intrinsic worth, but on the ground that the New York exclusive franchise of *anything* is worth $2,500. The fact is that professional football in the twenties was something like the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral. If the losing teams were riddled enough, they suffered hemorrhages of home support, a disease resulting in terminal box-office anemia.

Until the franchises gravitated to the big cities, local characters, or "sports," as they were then known, were the usual owners of the teams. These local "sports," for the most part, were small-time promoters, driven by the urge to be recognized as prominent in the little worlds in which they lived. They strove to achieve local kudos and prominence by "putting their city on the map," to hobnob with the politicos, local officialdom, and local newspapermen; they bore an air of pith and moment, as befits men of great local chamber of commerce importance.

One such local character, Piggy Simandl, was the owner of the Orange franchise. He was a wholesale meat salesman. Short and fat, his puffy, red-veined jowls, low forehead, and close-set eyes were indisputably clear evidence of how he got his nickname. Piggy was officious and bursting with his importance as a local impresario. He was a complete and voluble extrovert. He was flamboyantly agreeable, and everyone, including the team, liked him. Gates were extremely low at that time, even for a depression; about 2,500 to 3,000 people came to our games. Quite often, harassed but cheerful Piggy didn't have any money in the treasury. Payrolls were late. This wasn't unusual; sometimes even the Giants were paid in the dollar bills and silver collected at that day's game.

Unlike some of the big-business franchise owners of the later big-money years, these local promoters were not in it primarily for the money. To them, we players were not beef-on-the-hoof; nor were they corporate representatives, but often father figures for the team. This was

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particularly true of Tim Mara, owner of the Giants. A large, good-natured Irishman, he loved his Giants as if they were his children.

I

The Average Player

We weren't playing for the money. We weren't even playing for love of the game. We were playing because the game was in our blood, a compulsion that resulted from the spell of tremendous adrenaline-fueled exertion and excitement while under the influence of the crowd's applause. For the addicted football player, the beautiful, crisp autumn days bring an irresistible urge to sprint down the sparkling green playing field and to set his fellow man flat on his derriere. Few pagan rites quite equal the atavistic, troglodytic satisfaction thereby derived, the sheer savage exultation of the perpetrator of these happily licensed outrages nowadays known as The Sack. Anyway, we played because we couldn't help it. Most of us as college athletes had gotten a good deal of "fame," as it is laughingly called, and, like many more important folk, we were the prisoners of that narcissistic narcosis currently referred to as our "public image."

Football is a tough game to play; it is even harder to get over. For many players, perhaps most, the withdrawal pains approach the severity of a relative paranoia. Many settle into a dark morbid conviction that, because the "world" is no longer cheering them, it is against them. Apparently, the huge salaries today are no recompense for the shock of sudden anonymity. Thus, recently, I asked a retired Washington Redskin who had earned a more than modest fortune as a player if he missed the roar of the stadium. His eyes blazed, "Miss it," he flashed."I'm going to write a book about it!" "What are you going to say?" I asked. "I don't know yet," he flared, "but I've got the title: 'Death after Life.' " For him—and for many others—the ashes of fame leave a most bitter taste.

II

The Superstars

Professional football was stumbling along in the pitch-dark of these Darwinian velds, when across the Stygian skies there raced a series of superstars, lighting the first faint path to its future road to glory and wealth.

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Americans of the Roaring Twenties fancied themselves a race of champions. Their accolades thundered to the heavens when a few of their record-breakers reached the apotheosis of super champion. There was Babe Ruth on the diamond and Jack Dempsey in the ring; even Man o' War, a great nag, received the nation's adulation as a super horse. Harold "Red" Grange, the Galloping Ghost, a super halfback from the University of Illinois, was the equivalent figure in football. He deserved the adulation. The nation took Grange to its heart; almost overnight, his name became part of the language.

Red Grange is an American legend. A star high-school athlete from Wheaton, Illinois, he naturally gravitated to the University of Illinois. A modest lad of modest means and modest stature (5 feet 10 inches and 170 pounds), he thought at first that he was too small to play heavy Big Ten football. But Bob Zuppke, the Illinois coach, with his artist's eye (Zuppke was an accomplished painter), perceived the incipient greatness of Grange and, as he later put it, "painted the team around him." It was quite a portrait. In the three years that Grange carried the ball for the Illini, he scored thirty-one touchdowns in twenty games and gained 3,637 yards against heavy teams that were drilled for weeks specifically on how to stop him. The cognoscenti were amazed when the Illinois sophomore swept for three touchdowns against mighty Nebraska; the Cornhuskers traditionally fielded a forward line akin to the Great Wall of China. Following this, Grange turned back Iowa, when the Hawkeyes were at their peak, scampering around their end with the winning score.

The great showdown came against the University of Michigan Colossus, coached by the great "Hurry-up" Yost. Yost made no bones about his game plan: "Every time he [Grange] takes the ball there will be eleven hard, clean Michigan tacklers headed for him at the same time." The Michigan-Illinois game was what is normally called a classic; and when the two teams met in 1925, the clash resulted in the all-time classic classic.

Michigan kicked off. Grange received the ball on his five-yard line. Then he ran through the whole Michigan team for a touchdown. The next time he carried the ball, he galloped sixty-seven yards for another touchdown. The third time he was the ball carrier, he skirted off right end, reversed his field, and dodged fifty-six yards for a third score. Once again his signal was called, and once again he scampered forty-five yards, this time for his fourth touchdown. *And all within the first twelve minutes of play!* It was, and it remains, the greatest display of talent in collegiate football history. In the fourth quarter, Grange scored again: five runs, five touchdowns, 282 yards!

Awakened by this miracle, all serious football fans looked to Franklin Field, Philadelphia, where the Illini were to meet the powerful Univer-

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sity of Pennsylvania eleven. The weather was bad. Up at Columbia, we heard a rumor that the Penn coaches had assisted the weather by having fire hoses played on the field all night. Could Grange run in the mud? On the first play he went around his left end for fifty-six yards and a touchdown. Then he ran a kickoff back fifty-nine yards to the Penn twenty-five-yard line. Grange scored three of the four Illinois touchdowns as the Illini beat Penn 24-2. Grange received a tremendous tribute: when he left the field, 63,000 people gave him a standing ovation, and, in the handsome Ivy League tradition, the men in the crowd removed their hats. Grange was a once-in-a-century man—and everyone knew it. He received Lindberghian acclaim.

Immediately after his final college game, Grange, following the shrewd direction of C. C. Pyle, a promoter and a flashy dandy of the day, signed up with the Chicago Bears for the remainder of their schedule. His first appearance as a professional drew an unprecedented 36,000 fans in Chicago. Grange and the Chicago Bears went into a frenzy of barnstorming, playing eight games in twelve days. On a Saturday, in driving rain in Philadelphia, Grange drew 35,000 fans. The Bears hustled aboard their special train, still in uniform, heading one hundred miles northeast to New York City, where the very next day they played—and defeated—the Giants before a record crowd of 73,000. Grange took terrible punishment, but, a great thoroughbred, he always answered the kickoff whistle. The first tour yielded him $50,000—big, big money in those days.

After only a week's rest, the Bears embarked upon another sweep, playing nine games in January. At Los Angeles, 75,000 fans turned out to watch the epic struggle between the great Grange and his Chicago Bears and famed Wildcat Wilson from Washington University, who now played for the Los Angeles Tigers. The Bears won, with Grange scoring two touchdowns. The Grange tours had demonstrated that there was money—big money—in pro football as a spectacle. It was something vaguely akin to show business. It remained for George Preston Marshall, owner of the Washington Redskins, to provide the formula.

There were a few other stars of the first magnitude in the early days of professional football. Ernie Nevers of Stanford was a star comparable with Grange. Accordingly, a Duluth promoter, one Ole Haugsrud, formed a team consisting of fifteen players that he called the Duluth Eskimos, and he offered Ernie Nevers $15,000 along with a share of the gate. Between September 20 and February 5, the Eskimos played twenty-nine games while living out of a Pullman car. Since Grange and Nevers had been endlessly compared, it is significant that the Eskimos, with Ernie Nevers in the backfield, beat the Chicago Bears 40-6, with

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Nevers scoring all of his team's points. The then prevailing pay scale is indicative of the emerging show business aspect of pro football. Nevers, the star, got $15,000 for the season. The rest of the team (the other backs and the line, the "extras" so to speak) got $75 for a victory, $60 for a tie, and $50 for a loss. (The Tornadoes paid from $50 to $75 per game.)

Excellent though he was, Nevers did not have the box-office appeal of Grange. Neither did a number of other first-class backs, among them Ken Strong of New York University, Benny Friedman of Michigan, "Wild Bill" Kelly of Montana, Doug Wykoff of Georgia Tech, Father Lumpkin of Georgia Tech, and Chief MacClain of Carlisle. A little later another great player appeared, the famed Bronko Nagurski of Minnesota.

Our team, the Orange Tornadoes, played against all of these players after they turned pro. Like most of the pro teams, we had achieved some distinction in college competition but were merely run-of-the-mill players in the league. Like most of the league at that time, we were mostly composed of players from the area. From New Jersey, there were high-school captains who had done well on the college gridiron: Johnny Tomaini, Long Branch High School captain and crack end at Georgetown and the roughest player in the league; Frank Kirkleski, Nutley High School captain, greatest quarterback in Lafayette history; Bill Feaster, captain and rugged all-state tackle from St. Benedict's and, later, famed Fordham Granite Block; Heinie Benkert, a back from Rutgers; Carl Waite, White Plains High School captain and Georgetown back; and Steve Hamas and I, both East Rutherford High School captains. Steve was a four-letter man at Penn State and intercollegiate heavyweight boxing champion who later fought Max Schmeling for the world championship at Berlin. I was All-Ivy League, All-Eastern, but only honorable mention on the American Press All-American team—sort of a run-of-the-mill player among the pros.

III

A Different Type Game

The game that I played in the 1920s resembled English rugby, and the way the game was played then had, of course, a decided effect on the type of player. To cite only some of the most obvious differences between the game then and now: the ball was larger; players were scheduled for the full sixty minutes of play; a player for whom a coach substituted could not return to the game until the next half; the ball could only be forward passed from at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage, and the second incomplete forward pass drew a five-yard penalty.

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The result was that passes were few and were almost always on a third down.

It was a bruising game. Most teams were "right handed"—that is, they ran to their right, from an unbalanced line plus a single wingback (five men to the right of the ball). Thus, almost invariably, the focal point of attack was the defensive left tackle. The result was between seventy to one hundred pile-ups on the line of scrimmage per game. The fourth quarter, when both teams were injured and tired, was often decisive. This kind of play developed a general type of player called variously a "square rigger," a "husky," or a "brick smokehouse." On an average, the players ran between 5 feet 9 inches and 6 feet tall and weighed from 185 to 200 pounds, though a few went up to 215. Players were chunky and quick rather than fast; they were built "close to the ground," were trained "to get the jump"—that is, spring at their adversary before he got up momentum. A principal qualification was the ability to absorb terrific physical punishment. This macho bravado was a matter of pride. A player would never ask to be relieved; he was expected to "keep going until unconscious," and it never occurred to him to do otherwise.

When George (Long Live Linen) Marshall brought the pro football franchise to Washington, he revolutionized the game by insisting on opening it up by changing the rules. Backed by George Halas, he prevailed. The smaller ball and the removal of the restrictions on passing laid the foundations for the spectacular game of today. It brought on the big box-office money—and the big box-office money brought on bigger and better players.

Today, professional football is a full-fledged profession. A half century ago it was mildly disapproved of as something akin to gentlemen rankers out on a spree, a carryover from the British caste system, distinguishing gentlemen-amateurs from professionals. Particularly critical were the administrators of colleges and universities, who incorrectly believed pro football to be a threat to their own gate receipts. As a matter of fact, they benefited tremendously by the popularization of the game to such an extent that they became the farm system of the professional league, underwritten (and heavily) by unsuspecting taxpayers.

Part of the reward—and excitement—of the game in the early years was that practically every player in the league got a chance to see what he could do against the superstars. Like the other teams, the Orange Tornadoes had a crack at them all. Like the other teams, we weren't great but we weren't slouches either. We were, in the Damon Runyon vernacular, "handy guys."

We brawled Red Grange and the Chicago Bears to a 0-0 tie in Chicago. In style, Grange had uniquely reversed one of the hoary axioms of the game to make it his greatest asset. This axiom was that a runner

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could feint with his arms, legs, and eyes, but not with his belly button. Thus, in bringing down a runner in a broken field, it was essential that a tackler "home in on his belt buckle." Grange was the only exception. He would lope along, seldom more than at three-quarter speed; then, as the instant of tackling arrived, with Grange's belt buckle a few inches away, miraculously and maddeningly it would disappear. His tackler would lunge into empty space, and, be it added, experience a bad, unbroken fall. His running style defied all the rules. Grange had a natural, easy grace in executing something of a Nijinsky pirouette and a Ty Cobb slide that would leave him trotting off to the goal line and the tackler flat on his face.

Though Grange was the star attraction as a ball carrier, he won the profound respect of his fellow professionals because he played the game for sixty minutes, offense and defense, like the great athlete he was. More particularly, when he didn't carry the ball, he ran hard interference for the player who did; he risked everything on every play—he was a player's player, a pro's pro. While running, Grange presented a thrilling picture: a player who moved with the easy lope of a wolf and suddenly sprang away like a panther. Still, we held him to a tie—by playing Grange first and the Bears second.

Ernie Nevers was a totally different type of player. He was 6 feet tall and weighed 200 pounds. He was a "triple threat" man; he could kick, run, and pass, and he was excellent at all of them. Pop Warner, his great coach, declared Nevers was the greatest player he had ever seen, but his greatest forte was that, speeding like an antelope, he could suddenly wheel and hit the line like a stampeded buffalo.

One unforgettable play still indicates to me his magnificent power. He was rolling out to his right, as if to throw a pass, when he suddenly turned to hit the line. I was expecting it, and as he charged me, I charged him. We met head on. By every count, the advantage was mine: I was lower to the ground and could tackle him, and tackle I did. The impact was something like being hit by a runaway horse. Of course, we both went down, but the first thing that hit the ground was the *back of my head.* Even though I tackled him, he threw *me* backward for a two-yard loss! Nevers beat us that day 22-0.

To repeat, we weren't great, but we were no slouches either. We fought the New York Giants to a bloody 0-0 tie, and here I encountered another great player, Benny Friedman of Michigan. Benny stood 5 feet 10 inches and weighed 185 pounds. Benny had perfected the forward pass. Indeed, he was revolutionizing the game even with the old ball and under the old rules. He used the follow-through of a pitcher and something of a golfer's pivot on his left leg. He aimed and threw with his body. Throughout his life he swore that his pivot follow-through left him

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in a position to withstand terrible punishment, that his left leg was as important to him as his right arm.

Later, I played with the Orange Tornadoes against Benny and the New York Giants at the Polo Grounds, where he threw the greatest pass I have ever seen. It was a snowy day, the Polo Grounds' lights were on, time was running out, and the Giants, running out of steam on our twenty-five-yard line, had to throw a Hail Mary pass. Everybody knew it, so everybody keyed on Friedman—a blitz. I got through their blockers and so did several others, and we tore at Benny. Benny fell back to the forty-yard line. In the meantime, his end slid across our goal line, slipping as he did so. Then, at forty yards, in the gathering gloom, with a wet ball, Benny pegged it to the end, who caught it while flat on the ground!

Over the years, Benny and I occasionally called each other. Benny, in a way, never grew up. He stuck around pro ball, ran quarterback camps, and was as immersed in it as he was when he was passing for the Giants. For years I always greeted him with "Benny, how's that old leg?" and he would invariably and enthusiastically recite the protection given by a follow-through leg pivot. The last time that I called him, when I asked him the usual question, he stunned me by saying, "Ernie, haven't you heard? I lost my leg; they amputated it." Shortly thereafter, he killed himself: handgun.

By the count of most pros, the greatest all-around back was Ken Strong of New York University. He played for the Stapletons at Staten Island and then, for a long time, the Giants. Like Nevers, he was a power runner. He could also pass while on the dead run, and he had a terrific arm; but, above all, he was one of the greatest kickers who ever lived. I tackled him many times, and every one of them gave me a jolt of the kind that brings on double vision. It felt something like bringing down a mustang. His punts were all but superhuman. The ball soared and soared to the top of the stadiums, finally ending its arc in a perpendicular drop, where it spun like a top. When he finished his kick, his foot was high above his head; he swung his magnificent leg like a lumber boom, with a curious beauty not unlike that of a ballerina. In attempting to block his punts, we crossed our arms over our faces because, if the ball had hit our unprotected heads, we had the feeling it would explode our skulls. He was a perfectionist, and as he ran he yelled at his interference. It seemed as if he could be heard twenty miles out to sea. After the game he was the most affable and pleasant fellow, but on the field he raged for a touchdown on every play. However, like Grange and Nevers, he was not a born killer. He had none of Justice Holmes's "instinct for the jugular," but there were some who did. They were called "God-damners"—very rough, they often triggered very rough games.

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IV

The George Preston Marshall Revolution

Professional football, until the middle thirties, was a rough, collision sport. When George Preston Marshall, a great showman in the same class as P. T. Barnum, successfully insisted on opening up the game by unfettering the forward pass, he made it an exciting spectator sport based on speed and split-second timing; and when he eliminated the "stage wait" at halftime by duplicating the mass ceremonies of the collegiate bands, Marshall shoved pro football into the big-time show-biz circuit, even before TV. Television lifted pro football into a national institution. Today its TV revenues, shared equally by the twenty-eight teams, amount to something in the neighborhood of $700 million. Where a great player of the thirties, such as Bronko Nagurski, received $5,000 per season, the great player of today will receive more than a million.

George Preston Marshall's new type of game developed new types of players. The first change was from us "square riggers," the "Hercules" type (that is, stocky, quick, and able to absorb terrific punishment) to the "lean hound for a long race" fellow, who was much taller and much longer legged, probably just as quick but much faster as his stride lengthened, enabling him to get downfield in shorter time. This was the so-called Apollonic build. The newcomers were a bit heavier, but the weight was distributed differently.

In a less bloody way, the new type of pro football was following the pattern of the Roman amphitheater. More particularly, the long, wiry, and wily gladiator who fought with a trident and a net was a three-to-one favorite over his shorter helmet-shield-and-dagger adversary. In the Colosseum the faster tiger, though lighter, was a three-to-two favorite over the stronger lion, and so it was with us. The new type of player and the new games were better. The new Apollonic players prevailed over the old squat Hercules players.

But I cannot help but notice that the winning streak of even the Colosseum champions seldom ran over fourteen, just about the victory record for championship football teams two thousand years later, a main difference being that in the United States the winner's name is inscribed on a cup and in ancient Rome the loser's name was inscribed on his tomb. Nevertheless, the resemblance in the appearance of professional athletes over two thousand years is startling. In the Borghese Museum in Rome I saw the statue of a Roman boxer, sprawled out in his corner, his hands bound in with cestus, his disillusioned eyes gazing out warily and wearily from behind his broken nose. He was so much like the pros of

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today that, for a moment, I felt like shaking his hand. He was a prototype of a dozen athletes I knew.

The Apollonic type, in turn, was succeeded in pro football by bigger, heavier, and stronger players, and to these were added the special teams and specialists. The platoon system (one offensive team and a separate defensive team) results in the modern player playing only a fraction of the time we did. We were sixty-minute players. Extremely valuable on the hoof, the players nowadays have trainers and doctors at hand and are carefully watched for injuries. There was none of this on-the-spot medical attention in the twenties. There was no team doctor in attendance. An injured player was supported by a couple of his teammates. There were stretchers, but they were kept in the locker room. Since players were paid by the game, a man too injured to play simply wasn't paid the following week; and, as the joke went, at the end of the season each player was awarded his injuries.

The old game and the old players bear diminishing resemblance to those of today. Nevertheless, it is part of the folklore of the game that the old and the new continue to be compared. There is no question in my mind that a few of the greats of olden time would be national stars today: Thorpe, Grange, Nevers, Nagurski would clearly qualify in any league at any time. So would some of their successors: Sammy Baugh, Sid Luckman, Ward Cuff. They were backs and ends. With linemen it is different. Perhaps two or three in a hundred of the early linemen would make a modern pro football roster: the linemen of yore wouldn't be issued uniforms. This is pursuant to one of the oldest adages in all American sports, that a good big man will always beat a good little man—and we 190-pound square-riggers of yesteryear are little fellows indeed compared with the colossal 275-pound giants who bestride the tackle-to-tackle positions in football today.

Among other things, it is axiomatic that, everything else being equal, the most that a player can give away—that is, be outweighed—is twenty pounds. Nevertheless, the question frequently arises as to how the old teams would fare against the new. There is little doubt about this question among the surviving linemen who played in the twenties and the early thirties. The defensive line of a modern team outweighs the teams of a half century ago by about fifty to sixty pounds per man, and, in rough total, between three to four hundred pounds on the line of scrimmage. That is too much to push around for an afternoon. On the other hand, where the weight differential is not so extreme, and where speed is at a higher premium, especially in offensive ends and offensive backfields, the outstanding men of my day would most certainly, with a modern, mighty line in front of them, give the very best of the modern teams a very rough time of it. More particularly, a mythical team fielding

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a backfield of Nevers, Strong, Grange, and Friedman, with Ray Flaherty and Lavie Dilweg for ends, with an average big line running interference, would, I believe, beat any Super Bowl team yet assembled. But we linemen wouldn't stand a chance.

This would seem to answer the question. At a fiftieth reunion, I told Tom Kerrigan, my teammate-tackle both at Columbia and for the Orange Tornadoes, my conclusion. (Tom was one of the strongest men I ever knew; he was about 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 198 pounds. In addition to being a block of granite at tackle, he was the number four man, the powerhouse, of the Columbia crew that swept the East.) He became a distinguished lawyer, locally famous for his terse observations. "Tom," I said, "I've seen these new teams. They're four touchdowns better than we were." "Four touchdowns?" Tom sniffed. "*Every quarter!*" Confirming, I said, "Today, Tom, they wouldn't offer us a uniform." Tom answered, "And we'd be damn fools to accept if they did. Look at the weight lists! By their new rules or by our old ones, it wouldn't be a game. It would be a massacre—of us!"

Well, of course, you can stop Man o' War if you are willing to throw yourself across his pounding knees, but you can't do it for sixty minutes. I doubt whether we would be able to stand the punishment much beyond the first quarter. After that, there would be the clang of the ambulance bell overhead while an intern asks you your next of kin. Further, if the game were played under the old rules, the modern teams would score even more heavily because the weight counts for much more when the offense is restricted to ground attack. Ridiculously, many of the few survivors are thrown into the quivering rage of old men at the mere suggestion that we, in our prime, weren't the equal of today's players. That's nonsense: if magically returned to our prime, nine-tenths of us, especially the linemen, wouldn't be in the same league.

V

The Old Days

Before it was a highly paid profession, pro football, for all of the tawdry comedown from the college knightly tournament to the dreary run-down stadiums, was a hell of a lot of fun. As even the memory of the memory fades, I remember that time as one of tremendous vitality, of the spirit as well as the body; our crowded, boisterous locker rooms overflowing with overconfident young men had all of the vigor, it seemed to me, that Rosa Bonheur captured in her painting *The Horse Fair*. It was

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still only a game to us. Many of us were in professional schools—six in law, two in medicine, one in dentistry.

Pro football has come a long way since its days of innocence, but those early days did prove some things. Among the things proved were some of the old axioms. The early axiom, that a good big man is better than a good little man, has a companion: the best of the amateurs aren't as good as the run-of-the-mill pros. Some confirming evidence in this sparse evidentiary field was furnished when, in 1930, the best graduates of the great Notre Dame teams, including the Four Horsemen, and coached by Knute Rockne himself, agreed to meet the New York Giants quarterbacked by Benny Friedman, with the proceeds to go to the New York Unemployment Fund. Fifty-five thousand folks crowded into the Polo Grounds to witness the great test. The odds at game time were heavily in favor of the Notre Dame team, but the Giants won 22-0. The Notre Dame team, one of the greatest in the history of college football, failed to make even one first down.

For all its faults, football did leave one with a lifelong love of the game, the team, and one's teammates. We who were present at the creation were different in outlook as well as in physique from today's players. Professional football then offered no career, so many players were in graduate professional schools or were starting institutional or business careers. About half the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Orange Tornadoes were in postgraduate schools, and nearly all of them did fairly well in life. Two became jurists of distinction, one a surgeon of national reputation.

Teams were much closer. There was a tremendous carryover of blind team loyalty from college days. It is probable that with the big money that TV brought to the game, today's player tends to place his individual career first—or if he doesn't, his agent does—which tends to dilute that old all-for-one and one-for-all spirit. Incidentally, Grange, Nevers, Strong, and Friedman—the superstars of my day—were held in high esteem by their teammates because, even though they were in the big money (for those times), they were great team players, accepting their share of the injury risk despite having much more to lose. In the Darwinian economic world, this all-for-the-team training may be something of a mis-education. Nevertheless, we were brought up in this tradition.

Recognition by the White House is the supreme accolade of the American sports world. Over the years, the Olympic teams and the champions in the various sports have been received by the president. Almost routinely, the president has thrown the first ball to open the baseball season and congratulated the winner of the World Series. For a long time, professional football was ignored by the White House, but as

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the stadiums filled, the White House became aware of the importance of football in the sports life of the nation. Some presidents became avid fans; President Nixon even devised plays that he telephoned to George Allen, the coach of the Redskins. President Ford, of course, was an All-American center at Michigan in 1934.

This, perhaps, measures the change in status of pro football from the twenties to the eighties. While banner headlines were still blazing the dazzling performances of Red Grange, he was presented to President Coolidge at the White House.

"Mr. President," grandiosely announced Grange's proud senatorial escort, "may I present to the President of the United States 'Red' Grange of the Chicago Bears."

"How do you do, Mr. Grange," said President Coolidge, "I am indeed delighted to meet you. I've always liked animal acts."

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At Hemingway's House

MAURA STANTON

Today on the veranda
Outside the louvered windows
I breathe the balmy air
Of Key West, Florida.
In Hemingway's garden
Orange and scarlet birds
Sing from banana trees.
I pet his five-toed cats,
Look in their yellow eyes,
Content, intelligent,
Asking for affection.
If Adam had discovered
The back gate to Eden
After his years of exile,
Ploughing, planting corn,
And living in airless caves
With swift, ugly bats,
He might sit here, like me,
On this worn stone bench,
Among the phosphorescent
Orchids, and poinsettia,
Where butterflies alight
On stamen, or fingertip.
His face would flush in the heat
As he listened to various bees
Making fragrant honey.
He'd watch these black cats
Running up the palms,
Then down again to milk
Poured in a dozen bowls—
And he'd know more than God
About his sweet decision
To take Eve's proffered apple.

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The Heroic Women of Greek Epic

MARY R. LEFKOWITZ

SINCE THE POETRY OF HOMER FORMED the basis of Greek education, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* continued to be read and recited long after many people had ceased to worship the gods described in them. All educated persons in antiquity (which would have included some women), from the sixth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., knew by heart the details of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and many other men and women seem to have been familiar with the names of the principal characters and the outline of the story of the fall of Troy and the return of Odysseus. Poets in the seventh and sixth centuries, who wrote about Helen, Andromache, and Hector, used Homeric language to remind their audiences of epic situations and values. The human characters in the Homeric epics and their stories became the subject of later epics and of the fifth-century Athenian dramas that were performed again in repertory for many centuries. So any discussion of the status of women in the world of ancient Greece must begin with Homer, even though we do not know when he lived, or exactly how his poems were recorded, or anything about the background or life of the poet (or poets!) himself.

It is a popular assumption that the Greeks, especially the Athenians in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., were misogynistic. It is true that in Athens women not only could not vote but could not own property and that their movements were restricted. In the Homeric epics women seem to have little independence; they are always under the guardianship of a man, whether a husband, a father, or even a son. Wives must live in their husbands' cities; women like Chryseis or Briseis, who have been captured in raids, become slaves and are completely subject to their masters. Thus, while the legal rights even of free women appear to have been severely limited, because women can speak, and because the poet allows them frequently to comment on the action of his epics, Homer's women still manage to exert a significant moral force.

Scholars who study the role of women in antiquity have not always attributed much importance to what Homeric women say, because the

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methodologies on which scholars tend to rely concentrate primarily on plot lines and on questions of economic and legal status. But epics, for all the information about social history that they may contain, are not legal codes; and, while it is possible to learn from the poems some of the practical details of the lives and status of the world described by the poet, it is important to remember that the epics were written primarily to entertain and instruct. Also, since epics are made up of words, a commodity to which even Greek women had legal rights, one must in any discussion of women's role pay particular attention to what women say, even if it has no direct effect on the action and does not change the outcome of the events the women witness.

One might begin by asking what both epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, would be like if there were no women in them. In the first place, neither story would have happened. The Trojan War would not have been fought, and Odysseus (assuming he had gone to Troy in the first place) would not have bothered to return home. Helen, the woman for whom Troy was destroyed, does not appear until Book 3 of the *Iliad*, but the epic opens with a description of the plague that was caused as the result of the capture in a raid of another woman, Chryseis, the daughter of the priest Chryses. Chryseis was assigned to Agamemnon; her father Chryses offers Agamemnon a ransom, and the other Greeks urge him to respect Chryses because he is the priest of Apollo. Agamemnon refuses to give her back to her father, saying, "Before that old age will come upon her in my house, in Argos, far from her fatherland, working at the loom and attending my bed"; and, later, "I prefer her to my own wife Clytemnestra, since she is in no way inferior to her, neither in body or stature, or in intelligence or in any way in her work." The priest prays to Apollo, reminds the god of his services to him, and the god sends the plague on the Greeks, so that Agamemnon is forced to return Chryseis, and as a result demands that the Greeks give him another prize. Since Achilles opposes him, Agamemnon demands Achilles' prize, the woman Briseis, which Achilles is compelled to give him, and heralds are sent to take Briseis from Achilles' tent. During the course of the arguments about these women, no one asks *their* opinion; but the poet makes it clear that Chryseis's father, Chryses, wants to get his daughter back; even Agamemnon values her for something more than her looks (he mentions intelligence and work as well), and Briseis is unwilling to leave Achilles. Achilles himself weeps because he is deeply attached to her. As Achilles says later:

> The sons of Atreus are not the only men who love their wives; every good and sensible man loves and cares about his own wife; and I loved [Briseis] from my heart, even though she was a war captive.

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So Achilles refuses to join in the fighting, and as a result the Greek side suffers severe setbacks in the war. Thus, a quarrel over a woman, which involves men's honor and status but also human ties of affection, causes not only the war but the anger (*menis*) that leads to the death of Achilles' companion Patroclus and the principal heroes of the epic, Hector and Achilles himself.

Helen herself does not appear until Book 3. She is in the main room (*megaron*) of her house, weaving at her great loom, "a double cloth, purple, and she sprinkled in many trials of the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-clad Achaeans, which they suffered on her account at the hands of Ares." The goddess Iris, the messenger of the gods, appears to her disguised as her sister-in-law to tell her that both of her husbands, Menelaus and Paris, are about to fight for her in single combat, while the rest of the army looks on, and that she shall be called the wife of the winner. Helen's feelings at this point are not ambivalent; Iris puts in Helen's heart a longing for her first husband, Menelaus, and her city and parents; Helen dresses in white (as if for a ritual), "sheds a tender tear," and leaves the house accompanied by two maidservants—a woman does not go outside of her house alone in Homer, or generally in the ancient Greek world.

As Helen goes to join her father-in-law Priam on the wall, the Trojan elders say to one another:

> No one could think it wrong for the Trojans and the well-greaved Achaeans to suffer hardship for so long a time on behalf of such a woman; for in appearance she is dreadfully like the immortal goddesses. But still, even though she is so beautiful, let her go off in the ships, so that she does not bring sorrow to us and our children afterwards.

The whole dilemma of the Trojan War is expressed in this short speech. The elders comment on her beauty, because they have been looking at her, rather than talking to her; and certainly it was because of this beauty that Aphrodite selected her for Paris. But Helen in the *Iliad* is more than just a pretty face. It is significant that Homer makes Helen constantly remind us by her words and by her actions that Paris has offended Zeus, the god of hospitality, and that the Trojans, by defending Paris, are ultimately in the wrong. Priam blames the gods rather than Helen for the war; but Helen also blames herself. As she says, if a god or some other force compels a human to do what is wrong, that person always has the option of suicide: "Would that cruel death had been acceptable to me when I followed your son here, leaving my bedchamber and my friends and my growing child, and companions of my own age. But that did not happen, and so I am wasted away by weeping."

Most mortals in Greek literature, when presented with a moral

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dilemma imposed on them by the gods, either take no action or are persuaded by their friends to take the wrong action. Phaedra in Euripides' *Hippolytus* tries to overcome her passion for her stepson Hippolytus, and meanwhile wastes away with guilt and longing. Her old nurse, who came with her from Crete, persuades Phaedra to confide in her and then declares that she has a remedy for her passion. It is only when Phaedra hears what the remedy is—the nurse has told Hippolytus that Phaedra wants to go to bed with him—and learned that Hippolytus is outraged by the suggestion (or, in other words, that she will not only not get what she desires but will also lose her good name) that she decides to kill herself. Generally only the very young are ready to sacrifice themselves in response to oracles demanding self-sacrifice—namely, Iphigenia in Euripides' drama. Among adults, who have more opportunity to understand the value of human life, Alcestis is one of the very few who willingly decides to die when confronted with a choice between inaction and self-sacrifice. In most cases, as Phaedra says,

> it seems to me that it is not because of deficiencies in our intelligence that we take the worst course. Many people know what is right (*eu phronein*). But one must consider this: we understand what is good and we recognize it, but we do not struggle through with it to the end (*ekponoumen*), some on account of idleness (*argia*), others because they prefer some other pleasure to what is right.

Helen is no exception to this rule. When Aphrodite comes to tell her that Paris has come back unharmed from the single combat with Menelaus, even though she is disguised as one of Helen's own slaves, Helen recognizes her and claims that it would be wrong for her to do what the goddess wants her to do—that is, return home and go to bed with Paris.

> Strange divinity, why do you want to trick me like this? Is it that you will take me somewhere further away to some well-built city, either in Phrygia or in lovely Maeonia, if you have there some other mortal man who is dear to you. Is it because now Menelaus has beaten bright Alexandros [Paris] in battle and wishes to take my hateful self home again, is it for that that you now stand near me trying to deceive me? Go now and sit beside him yourself, and abandon the path of the gods, and do not return on your feet to Olympus, but always suffer with him and look after him, until he can make you his wife or even his concubine. But I am not going there [to his bedroom]—even though it may anger you—to go to bed with him. Later all the Trojan women will blame me; I have sorrows innumerable in my heart.

Aphrodite replies by threatening Helen with an ignominious death:

> Do not speak to me, wretched woman, lest I become angry at you and forsake you, and hate you as much as I now terribly love you, and devise cruel hatred

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against you in the midst of both forces, the Trojans and the Danaans, and you might die an evil death. So she spoke, and Helen daughter of Zeus was afraid.

Like most mortals, when confronted with the reality of death, Helen prefers to live, even though she is aware that what she is doing is wrong. She tells Paris that she wishes that he had been killed by Menelaus and urges him to return to the battle. As Phaedra says, most people know what is right, but cannot bring themselves to do it. In Helen's case, she hesitates because she is afraid of what Aphrodite might do to her; in Paris's case, it is because (to use Phaedra's words again) he "prefers some other pleasure to what is right" and persuades Helen to go to bed with him. As Helen says to Hector when Hector comes in Book 6 to get Paris to return to the fighting, "I ought to have been the wife of a better man, who understood the indignation and people's constant reproaches; but his wits are not steady, nor will they ever be, and I think that he shall pay the consequences."

Hector's wife Andromache is faced with a different moral dilemma. Her husband alone has been able to keep the Greeks from taking Troy, but, as she tells him, "Your courage will destroy you; you do not take pity on your little child and me in my distress, since I shall soon be your widow, for soon the Achaeans will kill you, all of them attacking together. But it would be better for me, once I have lost you, to go down under the earth." She reminds him that, since Achilles has killed her father and brothers and her mother now is dead too, "You are my father and mother and brother, and you are my young husband." She advises him to stay with her on the tower and to station the army near the wild fig tree, where the city is most approachable and the wall can be overrun and where a group of Greek warriors has already tried to attack. Hector replies that he, too, is concerned about all this, but that he would be ashamed before the women and men of Troy if he avoided the fighting (we have only to compare what Helen and Hector himself think of Paris) and that he has learned always to be brave and fight in the front lines. He admits that he knows that Troy will fall and that then his worst sorrow will not be for his mother or father or brothers—so many of whom have already fallen—but for her and the life she will lead as a slave.

And you might be in Argos weaving at another woman's loom, or carrying water from the spring Messeis or Hypereia, much against your will, but strong necessity will compel you. And perhaps someone will say when he sees you weeping, "that is the wife of Hector, who was the best fighter among the horse-taming Trojans, when they were fighting around the walls of Troy." So someone will say, and new grief will come to you because you have lost the husband who could keep you from slavery. But may the earth cover me in death before I know anything of your cries when you are carried off.

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But in the end Hector deals with this dismal future by ignoring it; he prays that his son will be an even better fighter than himself: "Let him kill his enemy and bring home the bloody spoils, and delight his mother's heart." As for himself, no man will die before his time; he tells Andromache, "You go home and see to your work, the loom and the shuttle, and order your slaves to go to their work. The war will be the concern of the men—all the men of Troy, but particularly to me." Andromache does as he says, but the slave women start singing the lamentation for the dead for him, even though he is alive. The poet thus makes it clear that ignoring the problem does not make it go away; the women know better. They mourn his death, and the sorrow and deprivation his death will bring to them.

Since ancient times, readers of the *Iliad* have realized that this passage is meant to set into vivid relief the conflicting demands of war. It is clear that here, as elsewhere in the *Iliad*, honor is more important than simple survival; otherwise Hector, as he says, could take Andromache's advice to practice defensive tactics only. Homer also seems to be saying that, while nature—at least in the ancient world—dictated that the principal duty of women was to look after the household, women can and do express their views about what their men are doing, just as the men show concern for the fate of the women. As an ancient commentator noted, Andromache's advice makes perfect sense, if her goal is to preserve Hector's life: "This is an invention to keep her husband from the field; and that is why Hector does not answer it." Instead he simply explains why he cannot do what she requests. He does not object to her expressing herself or to her reasoning; it is only that his code of honor will not allow him to follow her advice, even though he knows that the consequences of his action will lead not only to his death but to a life of slavery for her. By his request that she return home to her loom, Hector indicates that he has been moved by what she has said to him. As another ancient commentator observed, "The poet most effectively makes Hector order her to stay at home, so that she will not appear on the wall and persuade him not to fight against Achilles." Hector hopes that at home she can occupy herself with her work and not watch the battle, which is what she had been doing when he found her after he had first gone to look for her in their house.

By making Andromache remind Hector of the dangers involved in following his code of honor and having her point out a reasonable alternative course, Homer again shows that women not only understand what is happening in the male world of war but are, as the ultimate victims of war, perhaps better able to judge its consequences. Confusion about the nature of women's role in the *Iliad* has led to some curious

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misinterpretations of this passage. In the third century B.C., the Homeric scholar Aristarchus suggested that Homer did not write the lines where Andromache advises Hector to stay on the tower and station his men near the fig tree to guard the wall. Aristarchus reasoned that "the words are unsuited to Andromache; she is being general instead of Hector, and the advice is wrong." Other ancient scholars understood Hector's request that Andromache return home to her loom and her shuttle to be a reminder that a woman's place is in the home: "He describes in brief the life and household of a proper lady." Seen in this way, the passage makes a sharp distinction between the worlds of men and of women, or, as it is now fashionable to put it, between *oikos* and *polis*. But, as yet another commentator saw, the characters in the *Iliad* do not always make such clear distinctions between the men's and women's roles. Speaking of Andromache's strategic advice, this commentator noted, "Even if the advice isn't appropriate for a woman, it is appropriate for Andromache, since care of horses is not a woman's work, but Andromache (in *Il.* 8. 186–90) gives Hector's horses grain and pours out wine for them, since because she loves her husband she is concerned about even the horses who transport him." It has been suggested that Andromache's strategic advice may indicate that, at least in some cities in the area around Troy, women took some share in government; but it is not necessary to infer that Andromache is doing anything that would be considered exceptional even in mainland Greece. Women in Greek drama frequently emerge from their households to take action in the world of politics. Antigone is perhaps the most familiar example: she does not believe that a decision made on behalf of her city is justified, and she not only expresses her dissent to her uncle the king but actively opposes it.

The focus of the next fifteen books of the *Iliad* is on the battle and on the question of Achilles' commitment to it. Even though his concentration is on the war, Homer still reminds us of the losses that are borne by the women involved with the men. In the story of Meleager, which Phoenix tells to Achilles to urge him to rejoin the Greek forces, Meleager is finally persuaded to come to the aid of his city by his wife.

> She begged him, weeping, and told him all the sorrows which come to people when their city is taken; they kill the men, and they destroy the city with fire; other men lead from the house the children and the deep-girdled women; and the heart within him was roused when he heard of these evil deeds.

When Achilles himself finally decides to return to the fighting because his friend Patroclus has been killed, his mother, the goddess Thetis,

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reminds him that if he returns he will die soon after he has killed Hector. But Achilles, like Hector, must think first of his honor and of the friend he has betrayed by not being there to protect him:

> Now let me win glory, and let me cause some Trojan or Dardanian woman to wipe away the tears from her soft cheeks with both hands in lamentation; let her know how long I have paused from the fighting. But do not try to keep me from the battle, even though you love me. You will not persuade me.

But, as Achilles knows, his mother will suffer as well. As Thetis says to Hephaestus when she goes to get Achilles' new armor:

> [Peleus] gave me a son to bear and to raise, the greatest of heroes, and he grew up like a sapling, and I raised him, like a vine-shoot in the best part of the vineyard, and sent him forth to Ilion in the beaked ships to fight the Trojans. But I will not welcome him again, when he returns home, to the house of Peleus. And now even while he lives and sees the light of the sun, he grieves, and I cannot come to his rescue.

The effect of war on women is even more poignantly expressed by Briseis, whom the poet lets speak for the first time when she sees Patroclus's dead body:

> For me sorrow follows upon sorrow, always. I saw my husband, to whom my mother and father gave me, cut down by the sharp bronze in front of my city, and my three dear brothers, whom one mother bore along with me, all of whom went to their death on one day. But you [Patroclus] would not allow me, when swift Achilles killed my husband and sacked the city of godlike Mynes, to weep, but you said that you would make me the bride of godlike Achilles, and take me in the ships to Phthia, and to give me a wedding feast among the Myrmidons. So I weep for you dead unceasingly; you were always kind to me.

The poet adds: "So she spoke weeping, and the women joined in lamentation, openly for Patroclus, but each for her own sorrows," lest it seem that Briseis has accepted her new lot too easily.

These passages, even though they are widely separated from one another and provide only brief interludes in the main course of the narrative, prepare us for the anguish expressed by Hector's parents when, in Book 22, they see him waiting to engage Achilles in single combat. Hector's father Priam speaks of the loss of all of his other sons, of the even greater loss to Troy if Hector is killed, and of his own death at the hands of the Achaeans. Hector's mother Hecuba weeps and bares her breast to remind him of the *aidos*, or respect, that Hector owes to the mother who bore him. We may compare how in Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers* Orestes is determined to kill his mother Clytemnestra until she

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makes the same gesture, but then he hesitates and asks his friend Pylades, "Shall I respect (*aideistho*) my mother, and not kill her?" Hecuba also reminds Hector that she nursed him herself and urges him to come within the walls, but she concludes not with a prediction of what will happen to her when she dies but of how neither she nor his wife will be able to weep for him on his bier, since "a large distance from us beside the Argive ships the swift dogs will devour you." Her words anticipate the course of the action, the death of Hector, and the defilement of his body by the angry Achilles. When she sees how Achilles is mistreating his body, she tears out her hair and throws her veil aside and weeps loudly. The importance she attaches to proper burial is characteristic, however strange it may seem to us. In both archaic and classical times, carefully orchestrated ceremonies accompanied death, and in the first phase of ritual, the laying out of the corpse (*prothesis*), women, and particularly the close female relations of the deceased, played the prominent role, both in preparing the body for burial and in mourning.

As Priam weeps for his son and plans to try to ransom the body, Hecuba leads the formal lamentation, which Andromache hears from her house. Andromache is where we last saw her—as if no time had passed since Book 6—weaving at her loom in the interior of her high home. Like Helen in Book 3, Andromache is weaving a purple double cloth, but unlike Helen, who weaves the story of the contests endured by the Greeks and the Trojans in the course of the war, Andromache, as if now oblivious to the action that in Book 6 she had followed so closely, in Book 22 simply weaves in patterns of flowers. When she hears her mother-in-law's cry, she fears that Hector has been cut off alone by Achilles. She rushes to the wall like a maenad, and when she sees what has happened, darkness falls on her eyes, and she throws off the headdress that Aphrodite gave her on her wedding day. Finally she recovers enough to speak, but this time her speech concerns not herself but their son Astyanax. She fears (irrationally, since Hector has a large family) that because he will have no father to watch out for him, he will, as an orphan, be socially ostracized by other men; also she laments that the burial clothes she has made for Hector will never be used, since his body will be eaten by dogs and worms, far away from his parents. Significantly, it is with this speech about the loss of a father and husband, and not with Achilles' triumph and revenge, that this book of the *Iliad*, which describes the death of Hector, comes to an end.

The final book of the *Iliad* follows the same general narrative pattern as Book 22. There is an encounter between two men, this time Priam and Achilles, and the book ends in Troy with the funeral of Hector and

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lamentations of the women in Hector's family. This time Andromache rather than Hecuba begins the lamentation; she fears for her son's future now that the great defender of all the women and children in Troy is dead:

> The women will be carried off in the hollow ships, and I along with them. And you, my child, either you might follow me, and there do work that will be disgraceful, toiling for a harsh master, or one of the Achaeans will take you by the hand and throw you from the tower, a cruel death, in anger because Hector has killed his brother or father or even his son, since many Achaeans bit the earth with their teeth at the hands of Hector.

She concludes her lament not with the grim future but with their marriage: "To me most of all you will have left cruel grief, for you did not reach out your hands to me when you died, nor did you speak to me words that I might always have remembered, for nights and days, as I wept." Her wish that she might have been with Hector when he was dying suggests how important it was for Greek families, through the rituals associated with death, to demonstrate a love for one another that will, at least through memory, survive even after burial. Performing the last rites for one's close relatives, as Sophocles demonstrates in *Antigone*, ensures that the survivors will be welcomed by their family when they, too, join the dead in Hades. In the play, Antigone pleads:

> I hope to come dear to you, my father, and most dear to you, mother, and dear to you, my brother, since with my own hand when you had died I washed you and arranged your clothing and poured libations on your tombs.

It is significant that Andromache, a woman, does not wish to avoid witnessing the death of her husband, whereas Hector, who has seen so many deaths on the battlefield, does not even want to contemplate the thought of his wife's enslavement or the death of his son.

Hecuba's lamentation, by contrast, comments on the futility of revenge. Achilles took pity on some of Hecuba's sons and sent them away in exile, but he killed Hector because Hector had killed Patroclus, "but even so he did not bring him back to life." Hecuba seems satisfied at least with the way Hector's body has been restored by the gods, so that he appears to have died a painless death: "You lie there like someone Apollo of the silver bow had approached and killed with his gentle arrows." This peaceful image provides a poignant reminder of what might have been had there been no Trojan war.

But we are quickly brought back to reality by Helen, the last woman to lead the lamentation. She recalls how Paris brought her to Troy, and

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again she exclaims, "Would that I had died before I came here!" During the twenty years that she has been in Troy, Hector was always kind to her, and he saw that her in-laws treated her well. "There was no one else in wide Troy so kind or friendly to me; all the rest were afraid of me." This book of the *Iliad* ends with the lighting of Hector's pyre and the burial of his remains, and the epic ends, "Thus they carried out the burial of Hector, tamer of horses." But it is the women who speak the last important speeches in the epic, and it is their loss and prospect of further suffering that Homer's audience is left to contemplate, the last and certainly most painful result of the wrath of Achilles.

If Homer had intended the *Iliad* simply to glorify war, he would have ended his epic with the fall of Troy and the triumph of the Achaeans. That he does not do so suggests that he meant his epic to describe *all* of the effects of Achilles' wrath, both victory and defeat; and it is in expressing the effects of defeat that the women play a crucial role. If there were no women in the epic, or if the power of speech had been denied them, the progress of the war would have occupied our attention. But Greek religion in a fundamental sense precludes contemplation of victory without defeat; human life, as Achilles says, can never be all good; Zeus gives men a mixture from one of his two jars—good and evil or all evil. Thus, every victor must be prepared for eventual defeat. It is perhaps for this reason that Aeschylus's *Persians*, which describes the Greek victory at Salamis, is set not in the victorious city of Athens but in the palace of the defeated king Xerxes and is seen through the eyes of the king's mother.

The women who observe and comment on the consequences of war are not ordinary women; they are members of ruling families. Even Briseis before she was captured by Achilles was married to the king of Lyrnessus, a city in the Troad. Much has been written about the nature of men's heroism, which is of course what the *Iliad* is primarily about; but we might also try to define some of the qualities of the women in their families. I have called them "heroic" in my title, but in fact the Greek term *heros* applies only to men, and the female equivalent, *heroine*, does not occur until the fourth century and then is used as the title of semi-divine creatures, like springs and nymphs. Women by their very nature cannot be heroes, because heroes get their title by killing, destroying, or accomplishing something extraordinary, like founding a city. At the same time, the women of the *Iliad* seem in their way to follow recognizable standards of female behavior. They work the loom and design the patterns of the cloth they weave, and they lead the lamentations for the dead and consider themselves responsible for the details of the laying out of the dead body. They are excitable and emotional; they

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express fear and sorrow and grief without restraint. But, because they also understand the full consequences of what is going on around them, they can remind the men and the audience of where all of the fighting ultimately will lead them, and, thus, provide a balance and moral tone that would otherwise be missing.

In the end, the surviving men accept the women's view of the nature of war. Achilles in Book 9 plays the lyre that he captured when he sacked Eetion, the city of Andromache's father, and sings of the famous deeds of men. But, in Book 24, like Thetis when she speaks to Hephaestus about the armor and Andromache in her lamentation for Hector, Achilles concentrates on the suffering the war has caused his family and Priam:

> [My father Peleus] had only one son, doomed to an untimely death. I will not be able to look after him as he grows old, since I sit in Troy, far away indeed from my fatherland, causing sorrow to you and to your children. And you, old man, we hear that you were once happy . . . that you were distinguished by your wealth and your sons; but the Uranian gods have brought this grief to you, and always about your city there are battles and slaughter.

Helen's story, compared to that of Andromache or Hecuba, has a relatively happy ending. But she is no exception to Achilles' rule that the best one can get in life from Zeus's two jars is a mixture of good and of evil. When next we see Helen—at least in terms of the chronology of the myth—in Book 4 of the *Odyssey*, she is back with Menelaus in Sparta. Troy has fallen, and Agamemnon has been murdered on his return home by Helen's sister Clytemnestra. Like Helen, Clytemnestra was seduced by another man, her husband's cousin Aegisthus, and went to live with Aegisthus in his house. But Clytemnestra went off *willingly* and seems not to have regretted her action. Helen, on the other hand, once she is in Troy, wishes that she had killed herself before she had gone off with Paris and left her home and child and brought such sorrow to the Trojans. Her attitude in the *Odyssey* remains the same:

> The other Trojan women wept [when Odysseus secretly entered Troy and killed many Trojans], but I rejoiced, for already my heart had turned to go back home, and I lamented my delusion (*ate*), which Aphrodite gave me, when she led me there away from my dear homeland, and made me take myself from my child and my bridal chamber and my husband, who lacked nothing, neither in intelligence or appearance.

In the *Odyssey*, Helen's daughter Hermione and Menelaus's son by a slave girl, Megapenthes, are being married on the same day. In so accepting and honoring Menelaus's son by a concubine, Helen shows herself to be a model wife. Once again a comparison with Clytemnestra

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is instructive. When Agamemnon returned home, Clytemnestra was present at the banquet where Agamemnon and his men were slaughtered by Aegisthus. As the ghost of Agamemnon recalls it, she killed with her own hand, next to her dying husband, the concubine Agamemnon brought home with him from Troy, Cassandra, who is said in the *Iliad* to be the most beautiful of Priam's daughters. Clytemnestra's resentment of the beautiful young Cassandra would have seemed natural; Deianeira in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* also feels threatened by Iole, whom Heracles sacked a city to obtain. But, as the tragedians show, a wife is better advised to accept such behavior on her husband's part. In the *Odyssey*, Helen seems to have followed the advice that Andromache, as the concubine of Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, gives in Euripides' play to Neoptolemus's wife, Hermione, about going along with one's husband in his love affairs and nursing his bastard children, so that she might do nothing to displease him.

When Helen enters the room, she is said to resemble Artemis, which suggests that she is still beautiful and, like the goddess, pure, but nevertheless dangerous. Whereas in the *Iliad* she was working at her loom with her female slaves, in the *Odyssey* she is seen doing the sort of work one can do while entertaining company. Accompanied by her servants, Helen goes to join Menelaus and his guests and begins to work in wool with a golden spindle and a beautiful silver basket. With the same acute intelligence that she had in the *Iliad* when she recognized Aphrodite even though the goddess was disguised as one of her old servants, Helen identifies Telemachus immediately as Odysseus's son. The whole company, including Helen, weeps at the thought of the Trojan War and the losses it has brought to each of them, but Helen then uses her extraordinary intelligence to give Menelaus and his guests an elixir, to keep them from weeping. This drug, which they obtained in Egypt, is designed specifically to bring to an end grief and anger (*nepenthes t' acholon te*, the dominant emotions of the *Iliad*), and causes one to forget one's sorrows:

> Not for that day would one shed a tear down one's cheeks, not if one's mother or father died, nor if they slaughtered before one's eyes a brother or dear son.

Only after she has put the drug into the wine does she talk again about the Trojan War and Telemachus's father, Odysseus, who is now lost.

This portrait of Helen in the fourth book of the *Odyssey* helps explain why, once Troy was captured, Menelaus did not repudiate or punish the woman for whom so many men had lost their lives—"hateful Helen," as Achilles calls her—once he understands the full consequences of his

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wrath. Athenian law required that a man must divorce a wife who had committed adultery willingly. Thus Euripides, when writing about Helen for Athenian audiences, either told a version of the myth where the real Helen was held in Egypt while the war was fought over a phantom, or he made Helen able to persuade Menelaus not to kill her by skillful rhetorical arguments. In Homer this question never seems to come up. It is not that she was unwilling at first, though of course she later regretted her actions; Aphrodite was primarily responsible, but Helen in the *Iliad* takes a share of the blame by saying that she did not kill herself when she had the choice. Since she is such an exemplary wife—beautiful, intelligent, sympathetic, and understanding—Homer allows us to see why Menelaus is content to have her once again as his wife and to sleep with her in the same bed. But perhaps the ultimate reason that she must remain alive is to tell others what she has learned and how much she has suffered. Men, like Achilles, sing of the famous deeds of men, but Helen, sitting at her loom in Troy, wove the story of trials the Trojans and Achaeans experienced on her behalf. The principal female characters in Homeric epics understand and suffer; they survive to pass on their knowledge, even as slaves, to their new households. As Jasper Griffin observes in *Homer on Life and Death* (1980), "Helen is a legendary figure not for her great achievements, not even for her womanly virtue, like Penelope, but for her guilt and suffering."

If the Trojan War (the subject of the *Iliad*) was fought for Helen, the return of Odysseus (the subject of the *Odyssey*) was accomplished for Penelope. The goddess Calypso offers Odysseus immortality, and he admits that "wise Penelope is inferior to you to look upon, both in stature and height," but he is willing to endure more suffering to return to her. The suitors clearly are not interested in her solely for her wealth, though she would bring a dowry when she left Odysseus's house; nor for her youth, since she already has a son who is reaching manhood. The suitor Antinous says they admire her for her intelligence:

> She understands how to do beautiful work and has a fine intelligence, and wiles (*kerdea*), unlike any of the fair women of the past, Tyro [loved by Poseidon] or Alcmene [the mother of Heracles by Zeus] or Mycene [daughter of the river Inachus], none of these had an intelligence like Penelope's.

In the end, Penelope is admired and remembered for her faithfulness as well:

> What sound intelligence (*agathai phrenes*) blameless Penelope had, the daughter of Icarius! How well she waited for Odysseus, her husband! So the fame of her excellence (*arete*) will never perish, and the immortals will make a delightful song to steadfast Penelope for mortal men.

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The negative foil for her behavior is not Helen, who, as we have seen, behaved as well as humanly possible under the circumstances, but Clytemnestra:

> She did not plan evil deeds like the daughter of Tyndareus [Clytemnestra], and kill her husband. About her a hateful song will come down to men, and she will give a bad name to all women, even if a woman does good deeds.

Clytemnestra, before she was seduced by Aegisthus, "had possession of a good intelligence." But, unlike Penelope, she did not use it to wait for her husband's return. What enabled Penelope to wait is not simply her intelligence, but a quality she shares with her husband—the ability to endure hardship. She has not, like Andromache, lost her husband in war; but, on the other hand, she does not know whether he is dead or alive:

> It soon will be time for sweet repose, for whoever can find sweet sleep, even though he is grieving. But to me the god has also given boundless grief, and I enjoy my days as I grieve and weep, as I look at my work and my servants' work in my house. But whenever night comes, and sleep overcomes everyone, I lie in my bed, and bitter cares throng around my heart.

She compares herself to the nightingale, who always mourns for the son she killed, and even when Odysseus returns and kills the suitors, she will have no long respite. She dreams that an eagle comes and slaughters the geese she has been fattening, whom she has enjoyed looking upon; and in reality Odysseus's revenge will start another battle and another journey for him. If Helen gains the respect of Greeks and Trojans alike for her awareness of her guilt and for her suffering, Penelope's fame also depends on her awareness of the pain her resistance will cause and on her sorrow.

Since ancient historians, with very few exceptions, do not record what ancient women thought of their lives, we cannot know for certain what ancient women learned from the portrayal of women in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The epics, of course, depict a heroic world that existed in an indefinite past time rather than in the present. But the conditions of life for Greek women did not change very much until the Hellenistic Age. It was still possible in the fifth century that if a city was captured, either by Greeks or by foreigners, the men would be put to death and the women and children sold into slavery. This is what the Athenians threatened to do to the city of Mytilene and in fact did to the inhabitants of the island of Melos. Helen, Hecuba, and Andromache appear as characters in several surviving Greek dramas, each of which provides new reflections and comments on their experiences. At least we can say that women in tragedy follow the pattern set by the women in Homer,

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one of understanding what is going on around them and of trying to instruct others about what they see. It is also fair to say that in all these dramas the women—even Medea, or, as we have seen, Phaedra—are capable of considering and expressing their thoughts on serious ethical questions, whether or not they decide in the end to do what is right.

If Athenian men simply regarded Athenian women as chattels or distrusted them completely because of their gender, they would not have continued to attribute to them such an important role in drama. We might compare the articulate words of the women in Homer and in Athenian drama to the relative silence attributed to the female relatives and friends of Jesus at the time of his death. In the winter of 412 B.C., just before the destruction of the Athenians' ambitious expedition to Sicily, which guaranteed their ultimate defeat in the Peloponnesian War, Euripides, in his play *Helen,* lets his chorus of Greek women make the following comment on Helen and the Trojan War:

> Mindless, all of you who achieve your excellence (*aretai*) in war and in conflicts of the mighty spear, senselessly trying to bring to an end the sufferings of mankind. If a conflict of blood decides [the winner], strife will never leave the cities of men. Helen, by strife they won the bedchambers of Priam's land, when it was possible with *words* to settle the fighting for you. Now they are in the charge of Hades, and the bright flame, as if from Zeus, has rushed over the walls [of Troy]; you bring sorrows upon sorrows, miserable hardships, lamentations.

The lines are remarkable, not only because they were written by a dramatist who was at other times capable of voicing intense patriotism, but because they are put into the mouths of women. Knowing and saying what is right may not seem like a very rewarding role, especially if men (and some women) seem always to disregard what they are saying; but no one who heard those lines, at the time of their performance and ever since, could fail to see that there was another kind of excellence to be won, without violence and with intelligence, and this was the excellence (or what we might now call heroism) of suffering and understanding that can be found in women.

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Writing Great-Grandfather's Biography

MARNIE JONES

MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER, Samuel M. "Golden Rule" Jones, four-term reform mayor of Toledo, Ohio, was both an important figure in the reform movement at the turn of the century, and, as I am beginning to learn, a very curious character. The *Chicago Tribune* wrote in 1902, two years before he died after a serious illness: "Americans would regret the untimely death of Mayor Jones. He is picturesque and unconventional. He preaches the golden rule and sometimes practises it. . . . It is to be hoped that Mayor Jones will not leave Toledo for another and better world—a world so much better that there will be nothing there for him to improve. He is not needed there as he is in the Ohio city which he rules." Samuel Jones was indeed both picturesque and unconventional. He had proved the American Dream a reality: coming to this country from impoverished north Wales with his parents in 1850, he eventually earned a fortune in the Ohio oil fields. But if the dream became reality for him, it was not for many others, and that realization changed his life. Sometime in the last ten or twelve years of his life, he underwent a radical change in political philosophy. The depression of 1893—until 1929 *it* was called "The Great Depression"—altered his view of himself and his society. He instituted an eight-hour day in his oil fields in order to put more men to work; where previously six men had worked a drill for two, twelve-hour shifts, now nine men worked for three, eight-hour shifts. Although he lobbied hard for this change for the rest of his life, other oil men didn't follow his lead. In 1893 he set up a factory in Toledo to manufacture his patented "Sucker Rods," twenty-five-foot iron pumping rods that enabled the oil industry to drill deeper wells than the earlier hickory rods could reach. At a time when employees in factories around the country were faced with long lists of rules to abide by, he placed a tin sign on the factory wall: "The Rule That Governs This Factory. 'Therefore Whatsoever Ye Would That Men Should Do Unto You, Do Ye

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Even So Unto Them.' " He went on to establish a profit-sharing plan, paid vacations, a company cafeteria, and day-care facilities. As mayor he came to believe political parties, not just machines, were evils that should be eradicated. And he came to believe in socialism, which for him meant nothing more and nothing less than "brotherhood."

If Samuel Jones's business practices sound closer to the 1980s than the 1890s, so do his personal habits. At the time of his death, one reporter noted that the reporters always like him (however much their editors did not) because he "was always making copy for them." Late in life, in an attempt to escape from chronic asthma, Jones had become a vegetarian, a devotee of exercise who ran the mile from his home to the mayor's office, and a firm believer in the meditative advantage of standing on his head. The *Toledo News-Bee* reported that he began speaking from that position and "before the conclusion of the impromptu lecture half a dozen of his auditors were vying with each other in getting their heels over their heads." The paper dryly noted that their mayor's sanity was questioned. On another occasion, when he stood on his head in a downtown building, a crowd gathered to jeer him. A man on the outskirts of the crowd was heard to say in his defense, "Well, by heaven, none of anybody else's money fell out of his pockets."

Indeed, it did not. Jones turned over the $800 monthly salary he earned as mayor to his clerk, for distribution to those who sought his aid. Sometimes it lasted only three days, and he then turned to his private fortune. He turned so frequently to it that, while he was worth close to $1 million in 1897 when he became mayor, at his death eight years later his fortune had dwindled to $333,000. The *Toledo Blade*'s headline read: "Sensational Developments: Cost Mayor Jones $100,000 a Year to Run Mayoral Office: Another Five Years Would Have Seen Him Depleted of Wealth."

The task I have set myself in writing his biography is to find out just what accounted for the radical change in his philosophy: how did he become the man he was? To an old friend, Jones wrote, the year he became mayor, "Yes, I am the same Jones you knew in Duke Center, but am not the same man although I am the same Jones. The Jones you knew in Duke Center has become quite another man." What prompted the shift from capitalist to socialist? I also hope to determine how he fits into the Progressive Era: what can his experiences and his ideas tell us about municipal socialism, Christian socialism, and the early labor movement? Those are the questions that are to direct the focus of the book, but I am not sure they were the questions that had brought me to Toledo.

The Toledo/Lucas County Public Library houses the Samuel Milton Jones Papers. I began my research there at the end of his story—that is, with his death on July 12, 1904. The mayor's secretary had compiled a

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memorial scrapbook, which contained the press accounts of his last days and their assessment of his career. The scrapbook certainly makes the case for Jones's national importance at the time of his death. A bad cold had confined him to bed, a bed on one of the country's first screened porches, built on the back of the house because the mayor believed in the healthy effects of fresh air. His doctors saw him take to his bed in this unorthodox recovery room with some misgivings and were only able to bring him into the house when a heavy rainstorm began to soak his blankets. The memorial scrapbook also included condolence telegrams from such people as perennial presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan; Congregational minister and author of *Working People and Their Employers*, Washington Gladden; and socialist candidate for president, Eugene Debs, who once described himself as "a socialist-anarchist-communist-individualist-collectivist-co-operative-aristocratic-democrat." Eliminate the "aristocrat" appellation and he could have been describing Sam Jones. The labor unions also sent their regrets: the longshoremen, the bookbinders, the sheet metal workers, and the steam and hot water fitters. This is not surprising, as the A.F. of L. had courted him to run for governor of Ohio in 1899 on a Labor ticket. While he did run unsuccessfully for governor that year, it was as an Independent, not as a Labor candidate. Finally, I read obituaries from around the country. The Boston and New York papers all reported his death; eight Chicago papers lauded his passing with such headlines as "Sam Jones the Good" and "He Lived a Spirit of Love." All this provides a measure of his fame. In reviewing his second book, *Letters of Labor and Love*, in 1902, the *Los Angeles Times* began, "Everybody has heard of Samuel M. Jones—'Golden Rule Jones'—of Toledo. . . ." It seems they had, for small-town papers as far afield as the *Knickerbocker Press*, the *Boise Evening Bulletin*, the *Montreal Witness*, and the *Butte Intermountain* carried the news of his death.

The press coverage also warned me of a difficulty in writing his life. John Lockhart once said that Walter Scott was the only novelist who had managed to make a good character interesting; how was I to make sense of a man often compared to our most stellar political and religious figures? The *Chicago Farm, Field, and Fireside* wrote: " 'Golden Rule' Jones was, perhaps, the best beloved man living. He was of the Abraham Lincoln type in the honor and purpose of his motives and his sympathy with the masses of people." The *Boston Universalist* reached for an even higher comparison; in dismissing his critics, the paper wrote: "That sounds very much like things that were said of Christ and other great personal Masters."

The local press coverage of Jones's last illness is so extensive that I found myself in the curious position of knowing more about the last

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hours of my great-grandfather's life than I expect to know about my own. Ten days before his death, I read, "His Physicians Have Not Given Up Hope." By July 10, though, the mayor himself had given up; he lost consciousness the next afternoon, and the headline read "Mayor Jones Is Dying: All Hope Has Been Abandoned and He Is Sinking: But a Flutter of Life Remains." Even his delirious ramblings were reported and analyzed. "Commercialism Gambles on the Death of the Mayor" read the *News-Bee,* noting that the stockbrokers offered a "splendid tribute" to Jones's integrity by writing letters that predicted that Toledo Railways and Light Company stock would rise dramatically after the mayor's death. The message was clear: buy now. For days before his death the papers reported his pulse rate (132 Tuesday afternoon, the day he died). His death and funeral were given more coverage than native son President McKinley's assassination and burial had received in 1901, despite the fact that the Toledo daily papers had almost totally refrained from reporting the news of his 1903 campaign for mayor. More than fifteen thousand people passed his casket; one woman confessed, "I wouldn't go to the funeral of my own sister, but this is Sam Jones, and my conscience wouldn't let me rest if I hadn't shown him what little honor I can." The family checkbook recorded the cost of funeral arrangements: cedar, copper-lined casket, $300; embalming, $12; use of hearse, $8; use of twenty-two coaches, $110.

With few exceptions the tie to a great-grandparent must seem remote. One can learn that one's great-grandfather was preserved at a cost of $12 fairly dispassionately. In my case, the connection, three generations back, was extraordinarily thin. Golden Rule Jones had died forty-nine years before I was born; his son, my grandfather, died twelve years before my birth; his grandson, my father, was, owing to divorce, a rather shadowy figure to me. But suddenly, in turning a page of that scrapbook, the term *great-grandfather* had meaning, connection, relation to me. The memorial scrapbook contained a newspaper photograph, the last official one of Golden Rule's life, of the mayor with his baby grandson and namesake—my father. Suddenly he wasn't just a fascinating character, an anomaly, a good story.

Ten years ago the Jones papers were organized, catalogued, and preserved on microfilm with a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. In 1976, Jean Strong, then an archivist at the Toledo/Lucas County Public Library, taped a three-hour conversation called "Samuel M. 'Golden Rule' Jones Family History: A Conversation with Descendants." Listening to the tapes back in the stacks of the Local History Room at the library was one of the most peculiar experiences of my life. The "family reunion," as it was repeatedly called on tape, was now complete—at least for me. Or was it? There

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I was, listening in to my family, though I'd never met them, distanced by time, by academic interest, and by divorce.

Early in the tape, my heart racing in an entirely unacademic fashion, I heard a man talk about "Sam" in a tone that couldn't be referring to Golden Rule himself; it was clear he was talking about Samuel Milton Jones, II, my father. The voice said, "I had to finally give up on him." (So had my mother; so had I.) "It was curious—he went ten years without taking a drink. But the last time I saw Sam he was in Washington's General Hospital." (That would have been after we left him.) "Wasn't there a child?" asked the archivist. "Yes. A very nice little girl. Though she would be about twenty by now I suppose." (The little girl-turned-biographer listened with a very curious feeling in her stomach.) Jean Strong, an avid genealogist, asked for my mother's name. "Marjorie," they said. "And her maiden name?" They groped to remember. ("Sherman," I said, but there was no one to hear.)

Aled Davies, the man who once thought me "nice" years ago, had come to the States from Wales late in the thirties—some ninety years after Golden Rule had made the trip and for the same reasons. While he didn't know the mayor, his grandfather was Golden Rule's uncle and they were, he said, "the same breed of cat." His memories of Wales would parallel Jones's experiences—life in the Caernarvonshire Mountains hadn't changed much in those ninety years—it still hasn't. He spoke of the need to leave Wales, of Wales's "single greatest export—people." It was a one-sided conversation that raised all sorts of questions—tell me about Wales, about Golden Rule's wife, about my father.

On more than one occasion, someone on tape would remark, "Someone ought to do his biography." ("Someone is," I said.) It seemed important that they should hear that, and so I wrote to the one family member still in Toledo; he phoned me, and I had lunch with my first cousin once removed, a man who looked very much like my father. And I then wrote to his brother, an Episcopal bishop, and to Aled Davies on a farm in Indiana—wrote to them as both biographer and as "the very nice little girl" who lost half her family.

Golden Rule's Toledo is missing. Oddly enough, the cottage in which Jones was born in 1846 still stands halfway up Mount Snowdon, sheltered by Moel Hebog ("the battle hill of the Hawks"). Parking lots replace Victorian buildings in downtown Toledo today; they are more profitable. One of the few remaining turn-of-the-century buildings that still stands in Toledo is the "Valentine," which housed the mayor's office during Jones's tenure. But it now is boarded up, with faded "Save the Valentine" signs in its windows; its salvation looks doubtful. My newfound cousin arranged to get me inside the place to give me a sense of the office where both the desperate and the powerful went to see the

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mayor. The second floor had been remodeled—turned into hotel rooms in the 1930s—and could give me no sense of Jones's world. Again, the newspapers saved what the city itself had not. At his death, the papers described in minute detail the items on his walls: on the right as you entered the hallway to his office you read a quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson, on the left a quotation from Tolstoy. The first thing you saw on entering the office itself was a three-by-one-foot board on which the mayor had carved "Judge Not Lest Ye Be Judged." Apparently it remained in its place until the renovations of the 1930s. No one seems to know what happened to it then. Photographs of Tolstoy, Walt Whitman, the Spychalski Quads (Toledo's first quadruplets, one named Sam Jones Spychalski, who died before the mayor did), pictures of Horace Greeley, Peter Cooper, the Greenback candidate for president, and "the great Texas oil well" hung on his walls. At his home, Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief*, Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy*, the poems of Walt Whitman, and the biography of Guiseppe Mazzini were found on his table. But all this had to be conjured up in my imagination.

The S. M. Jones Company factory stands empty today on Segur Avenue—testimony to the employment problems that Jones had tried to eradicate close to a century ago and that still plague this city, as taxi drivers were all too eager to tell me. The tin sign with "the rule that governs this factory" is gone. So, too, is Golden Rule Park, once next to the factory, where children could play and adults could listen to music or to speakers from across the country. Here Jane Addams of Hull House, Eugene Debs, Dr. Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan, and Dr. Buck the "eminent theosophist" talked on subjects ranging from "Brotherhood" to "Direct Legislation" and "the Union Label" to sympathetic Sunday afternoon crowds, despite the protests of those who considered it Sabbath-breaking. The park, like the crowds who would spend a Sunday afternoon thus, is gone. The big house on Monroe Street was something of an embarrassment to Jones. "Inspired by the prevailing idiocy to want to be big and to want to do something big, the architect, in spite of me, built a home that is not in harmony with my ideas of a home," he wrote to a female journalist from Boston, "but it is in perfect harmony with the prevailing ideas among people who believe in 'expansion.'" (The Spanish-American War was soon to be at an end, and within two months the "Philippine Insurrection" would be headline news.) Expansion has continued since Jones's death, and his home made way for the Peristyle Wing of Toledo's Museum of Art. His discomfort with the grandeur of his home can be seen in the only justification he provides the New England journalist: "The best apology for being led into such an error," he concluded, "was to have carved on the doorsill this inscription: 'A wide house to lodge a friend.'" It did house many a friend in its day and was,

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as Jones described it elsewhere, the "headquarters for migrating birds of a progressive life." The house was named "Tan y Dderwen" (Under the Oak), so I went up one Sunday afternoon to the art museum to sit under that oak, imagining the scene that Friday afternoon eighty-two years earlier when, as the *News-Bee* put it, "Every human being in Toledo who wasn't locked up in jail or otherwise unable to get out and walk . . . stood for two long hours on the Jones lawn, in the street, and on the lawns of neighbors" to pay last respects to the dead.

Oddly enough, while the places of his life have left little tangible mark on the town, the most intangible of human aspirations remain—his ideas, not put into practice, perhaps, but stored in the Toledo library in the form of his letters and his library. While the Jones papers were not discovered until 1960, when workmen at the factory found three locked, handmade chests in the attic, his widow had donated in 1928 a selection of his books to the Toledo Public Library. Apparently, a good many of his books were given to friends at his death, but some two hundred and thirty remain, and they provide a valuable record of his taste, his beliefs, and the sources for his ideas. Since the library was not kept intact, I cannot draw inferences from what isn't present, but what remains is a rich and peculiarly useful mine for a biographer. If you can tell much about a man's mind from the books he keeps, consider how much more you can tell if he was a compulsive underliner and a man fond of scrawling in the margins. For this biographer, the marginal notes provided an opportunity to eavesdrop on an eighty-year-old conversation between reader and writer. Jones was such an inveterate book marker that long ago one appalled Toledo librarian, clearly unaware of the significance of the book, had felt compelled to apologize on the title page for a previous patron's "defacement" of Jones's copy of Josiah Strong's *Twentieth Century City*. There was no need to apologize to this reader.

Jones's marginal scrawl is most lengthy and most filled with insight when he disagrees with the author. My favorite book from his library is Andrew Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth*. Throughout its pages Jones has written in passing, "This is the highest pitch of absurdity," or "Oh Mercy," or "Oh Horrors." This last is found next to a passage that advises against small charitable gifts to the poor because the money would be "wasted . . . in the indulgence of appetite, some of it in excess, and it may be doubted whether even the part put to the best use, that of adding to the comforts of the home, would have yielded results for the race, as a race, at all comparable to those which are flowing and are to flow from the Cooper Institute from generation to generation." "Let the advocate of violent or radical change ponder well this thought," Carnegie concludes. (He did and it gave him the horrors.) On the second page of the book, by what is still Carnegie's first paragraph, Jones has written, "It is

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difficult to conceive how to crowd more fallacy into a paragraph than this contains. It is the result of unimaginative thought."

Jones's Bible—one of two in the collection—is a particularly rich biographical source. His 1891 Oxford edition, in his possession from October 1898, is marked variously in blue and red pencil and black ink. In the Old Testament, it was Job, Psalms, and Isaiah that caught both his eye and his pencil. There is a certain logic to his preferences. Job, of course, tells the story of consummate hard luck; and more to the point here, it details the "practical," bad advice given to him by friends. Sam Jones, though financially successful, experienced the trials of Job in trying to see his vision of a new world put into practice; he was most disheartened, not by attacks from clergy or political machine, but by the friends who advised him to be practical. Interviewed by the *Toledo Times* some thirty years later, Jones's widow reminisced, "Those were interesting years, but they were sad years, too, in some ways. The people who misunderstood my husband brought about the unhappiness which came in those years." Psalms is a poetical evocation of human need and an affirmation of the strength that comes from God's creation. Both Old Testament books would have given him comfort. In Isaiah, the hopeful prophet, chapter 61, verses 19–25, there is a passage that reads, in part, "and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her [Jerusalem], nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days. . . . And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. . . . The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." Next to this in the margin Jones had written, "Socialism."

But of all the books of the Bible, Jones was most drawn to the four Gospels. Matthew and Luke seemed to interest him most, judging by his marks. Here, too, it seems as though he was attracted to the books that most reflected his own interests; for these two Gospels differ from Mark and John in that they emphasize the need to change the world *now*. Perhaps closest to his heart was Luke 6:27–38, which is underlined with red and blue pencil and in the margin Jones has written in ink, "Our Rule." It reads:

> But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. To him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloke withhold not thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also them likewise.

The last line has been underlined with both pencils. As an avid

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underliner myself, I know that Jones did not read his Bible with a fist full of colored pencils in his hands. This artifact reveals that he went back to the book again and again and saw different things worth noting each time. In Mark, chapter 7, where Jesus criticizes the Pharisees and the Scribes for "leav[ing] the commandment of God and hold[ing] fast the tradition of men," Jones notes in the margin, "Jesus The Iconoclast." In the famous passage in Mark where Jesus casts the moneylenders out from the temple, Jones wryly notes, "They were simply doing 'Business' "—surely a revealing comment, as Jones's advocacy of life by the Golden Rule was repeatedly met with the objection that one couldn't conduct business that way.

Jean Strouse quotes the subject of her current biography, J. Pierpont Morgan, when he notes, "There are two reasons why a man does anything. There's a good reason, and there's a real reason." As his nickname indicates, "Golden Rule" Jones attempted to live his life by the maxims of Jesus. Even his bitterest opponents, people who thought him a fool at best or a dangerous anarchist at worst, acknowledged that he was honest. In my biography I do not intend to engage in hagiography. I will need to establish the real reasons behind the good reasons for his good deeds. However devoutly he believed in the rightness of his actions, complex psychological motivations must have prompted Jones to divest himself of two-thirds of his fortune in half-a-dozen years. Was it guilt? If so, what, precisely, was its source? His letters reveal that his wealth, like his big house, was for him a source of considerable anxiety. He clearly did not console himself, as philanthropists of his time, including Mr. Morgan, were wont to do. "It seems I have not yet arrived at that state of spiritual development," he wrote in the last year of the nineteenth century, "where I am willing to do as Jesus did, actually be poor and for that reason I do not enjoy that degree of liberty that would come to me, if I were to obey his simple commands. Of course, I know you will say, as many of my friends do, that if I did that, I could not do so much 'good,' etc. I reply it was Jesus's command just the same."

But letters, of course, are not an utterly transparent window to the soul. The letter writer, consciously or not, represents himself to a reader. And while Mayor Jones wrote that letter to a Mrs. E. W. Kaley of Minnesota and was hardly anticipating that it might be read by his biographer or his great-granddaughter, while it appears to be open and self-critical, it may be something of a loaded guide to his inner thoughts. But his marginal notations—they seem to me a different sort of information entirely. One may fashion oneself in one's own best image in letters to friends, associates, strangers. But the marks made in one's books, the notes scrawled in the margins, are a more private communication—a

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dialogue with the author and with oneself. In William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, when James quotes Horace Fletcher's *Menticulture* about how to rid oneself of the "cancer spots of worry and anger," Jones vowed in the margin, "A most desirable state of mind, to which I will attain. S. M. J., July 1903." Surely that is a revealing comment; even the last year of his life Jones was struggling against the "diseases" of worry and anger. What did he worry about? What aroused his anger? The Democratic paper, the *Toledo Bee*, for October 27, 1897, headlined an article about Mayor Jones's ejection from the machine-controlled Republican party with the words: "Griffin and Jones Fired: Sizzling Seance at Republican Headquarters: Mayor Jones Hurls Defiance Into the Teeth of the Dictators—A Hot Old Time." Allowing for the hype in a press that seems never to have aspired to objectivity, this news account still suggests the opportunity for the Mayor to exercise his anger.

I felt the irony of the fact that Jones had read a book called *How to Live Forever: The Science and Practice*, in May of 1904, a month before he took to his deathbed, in a peculiarly personal way. There, next to a sentence in the text that reads, "Each change of emotion is accurately registered, and science demonstrates that grief, anger, hatred, love and joy have each a specific chemical effect upon the blood," Jones noted, "My own experience has proven this true. I would rather lose $100 than lose my temper." A 1903 *News-Bee* story describes Jones standing on a desk, pleading with the angry crowd that had jammed a city council meeting to be calm. His adversary, with an eye to the crowd, said, "Might I ask the Mayor a question? How much gold did it take to bring them here?" According to the paper, the mayor "advanced . . . with his frame quivering and his eyes flashing." He was able to compose himself, saying that the "insinuation about the Golden Rule was uncalled for," but I sense that his response was based on the personal insinuation, not the insinuation against the principle. The exchange took place two months after his vow in the margin of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to rid himself of anger.

It was after I had discovered this evidence from press accounts and his marginalia suggesting that Jones was engaged in a war within—a battle against anger—that I found corroboration from a friend of Jones. Brand Whitlock, better known, perhaps, as a novelist, found a mentor in Golden Rule Jones. He tells a story in his autobiography, *Forty Years of It*, of a draining confrontation between the mayor and an adversary who had publicly "persecuted" him. In a conciliatory move Jones visited the man, sure that if they simply talked they would come to a better understanding of one another. Jones brought with him a piece of paper upon which he had written his position. He offered it to the man, only

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asking him to read it, but it was grabbed out of his hands and torn into bits. The mayor did nothing, said nothing. He left and went straight to Whitlock's office. Whitlock recalls his friend

> trying to master some unusual emotion. . . . After a little while his face broke into that beautiful smile of his, more beautiful than I had ever seen it, and he said: "Well, I've won the greatest victory of my life; I have won at last a victory over myself, over my own nature. I have done what it has always been hardest for me to do." . . . He sat in silence for a moment, and then he said: "You know, it has always seemed to me that the most remarkable thing that was ever said of Jesus was that when he was reviled, he reviled not again. It is the hardest thing in the world to do."

It is Whitlock's contention that this victory over his own nature was won at a considerable price. "He had never, it seemed to me, been quite the same after the day when he had that experience of insult which he did not resent."

Although the term had not yet been coined, Jones was clearly a health nut. In addition to reading *How to Live Forever,* Jones's library contains such books as *The Art of Living Long: A New and Improved English Version of the Treatise of the Celebrated Venetian Centenarian Louis Cornaro with Essays by Joseph Addison, Lord Bacon, and Sir William Temple,* as well as *Fasting, Hydropathy, Exercise.* He contributed to the journal *Physical Culture* (the *Vegetarian Times* of the turn of the century), writing, "I feel positively certain that I am on the road to perfect health. . . . I used to weigh two hundred and five pounds; I now weigh one hundred and sixty pounds." (He was five feet ten inches tall.) That was in September 1903. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear to me that he was dying. Apparently at the time, Washington Gladden had thought so too. The irony that he thought himself on the way to perfect health when he was dying gave his death a kind of pathos for me that none of the press accounts or obituaries evoked. And it gave me insight into the private man, not the public one.

I have in my notation system a file called "personal glimpses." I have no worries, really, about documenting his whereabouts, during the last years of his life especially. The press has documented his actions. His letters document his ideas. That aspect of my role as detective will be relatively easy, if my patience and my stamina hold out. But that is not the only detection required of me. I also need to master, with the aid of detection, two other skills central to the craft of biography, psychological insight and artistic presentation of character, to make sense of the man and make him live on the page. Glimpses to guide me here are more fleeting. The newspapers help me out, thanks to their own exuberance.

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Provocative headlines and visions of Jones quivering atop a city councilman's desk make the 1890s live more vividly than many a news account in this morning's paper. His letters, too, give me brief, personal glimpses. Many letters of 1898 exhort the reader to "see the finest thing there is in Toledo, OUR BABY." At times I hear his voice come through in snatches: "If you can get a good one [an oil well], sure, no mistake now Davie, it will do all right." A letter to his first wife's mother raises a question that fascinates me. He apologizes to his mother-in-law for not writing sooner and notes, "I am in danger of forgetting my best friends of whom, you, of course, are one of the first." Several letters to her begin with such an apology, and it makes me wonder just what were his relations to the mother of his dead wife. An even more frustrating letter (because the one that prompted it no longer exists) reads: "Nell [his sister] thinks I am not giving proper attention to Paul and Percy [his sons, the latter my grandfather], and my own dear wife, sometimes, I think, half fears that I am loving the poor so much that she will be robbed of the portion that is her due. I never was so nearly worn out as at this very moment." Nell's letter does not remain (and perhaps that is not surprising), so I don't know just what she thought her brother was doing wrong with his eldest sons, which were by his first wife. As Jones's biographer, I will need to see the family from her perspective too. I can well imagine Helen Beach Jones, his second wife, feeling a bit forlorn. His Christmas gift to her in 1899, for instance, was a copy of his first book, *The New Right,* with the inscription, "I believe you will value it far more highly than any costly 'present' I might buy for you from the shops of the dealers in 'wares.' " Am I reading myself into her life when I think that this might not have been the present she secretly hoped for?

Golden Rule Jones valued imaginative thought; he seemed to think it the key to sympathetic responses to the problems of the world and noted its absence in Andrew Carnegie. It also, of course, is an essential quality in a biographer. But the biographer's relations with his subject are necessarily complex, and one must beware the nature of sympathetic identification. Perhaps I stand in double jeopardy in writing the biography of a relative. "When a man is attempting to describe character," said Coleridge, "he may be right or he may be wrong—but in one thing he will always succeed, in describing himself."

While there is gold to be mined from his letters, I feel closest to Jones from our brief encounters in the margins of his books. Perhaps that's because I value books so much myself. But I also think he is most spontaneous there, most candid, most vulnerable. Several historians, men who did not know him, have written, almost in passing, that he lacked a sense of humor. I have wondered about that. He often does seem so deadly in earnest in his letters. I wanted to shake him, while

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reading one letter of 1897, when, after observing that Mason was a good baby, he went on to say, "Well, I think he ought to be. If he could just look around and see the hardships that other little babies have to endure, I am sure he would be quite satisfied." But then there's the Jones who would kick up his heels in the Toledo Club. Doesn't *he* have a sense of humor? In *How to Live Forever* there's a hint, I think. The recommendations in this early self-help book are as quirky as any to be found in today's "Lifestyle" sections of the newspapers or in any one of a dozen monthly health magazines. Jones read this book, as many of us read the latest diet, nutrition, or exercise information—with the hope that there is some new, easy answer, but also with a healthy, skeptical, self-consciousness as well. One elegaic passage of the book reads, in part, "Vitality is the product of infinite forces. If one has not the rosy cheeks of youth, it is not because there are not oceans of rich blood. Nature has unlimited force from which to draw the power to control facial muscles, and prevent wrinkles. Why lack an abundance of hair? Why be toothless when there are billions of tons of the elements essential for the building and rebuilding of the hair and teeth." Jones's comment—"Because I don't know how to grow hair etc."—makes me smile.

But the insights to be gleaned from the books of his library are few in comparison to the vast quantity of information in his letters. My biographical research is still in its early stages; I haven't made it through the entire collection of some fifteen thousand items yet. His own outgoing letters are available to me because, once he became mayor, he kept a "letterbook"—what twenty years ago would have been carbons and today are photocopies. Reading thousands of pages of these letters, sometimes written at the rate of twenty-five a day, moves one slowly through a subject's life. The effect is not unlike what original readers of the monthly serial parts of the novels of Dickens or Thackeray must have experienced. The reader's process in getting through the story is slowed down, and one experiences the illusion that the reader's life and the life of the story are somehow in rhythm. It is an illusion; I did not work in the library for eight years, though late in the day it sometimes felt like it. I first worked my way through a year or two of letters; then I turned to the incoming letters that survived. Later I worked back and forth between the two series of letters, but that first immersion into his daily life, by way of his own correspondence, gives one the sense of getting to know a subject. That feeling was intensified because his portrait hangs on the wall just outside the Local History Room, and I passed him several times a day. Each time I would look at him, and he would seem to look at me.

I need to determine to what extent his letters are an honest record of his thoughts. But beyond that I need to gauge how self-aware he was. After all, he may have been honest but not very analytical about his own

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motivations. At this point I am inclined to think I have access to a fairly open source. In part, my confidence comes from the consistency I have found in letter after letter, year after year. In part, it comes from a passage in Whitman's *Notes on the Meaning and Intention of "Leaves of Grass,"* which Golden Rule underlined and which my experience as a reader of several different collections of unpublished letters confirms. The passage by Whitman that Jones underlined reads as follows:

> Understand that you can have in your writing no qualities which you do not honestly entertain in yourself. Understand that you cannot keep out of your writing the indication of the evil or shallowness you entertain in yourself. If you love to have a servant stand behind your chair at dinner, it will appear in your writing; if you possess a vile opinion of women, or if you grudge anything, doubt immortality, these will appear by what you leave unsaid more than by what you say. There is no trick or cunning, no art or recipe by which you can have in your writing that which you do not possess in yourself—that which is not in you can[not] appear in your writing.

Perhaps every biographer should place this quotation in a prominent position. It is an encouraging reminder of the essential trustworthiness of our major source. It also provides essential instruction: Look out for what isn't said, watch for the revealing traces of evil, shallowness, pride, prejudice, envy, or doubt. It is there to be found in the writing—in your writing, as well as your subject's.

Golden Rule Jones became anathema to Toledo's clergy. They supported his first campaign in 1897 when he was a dark horse Republican candidate. But his first year in office revealed that he did unto saloon keepers, gamblers, and prostitutes as he would have them do unto him, and that did not please the clergy who saw sin but did not look behind it, as the mayor was wont to do, to the sources that bred sin. Perhaps no story better illustrates Jones's ability to confound the well-to-do than one reported by Brand Whitlock. The middle-class community had become increasingly distressed by the presence of "wine rooms," storefronts fitted with comfortable stalls where a number of prostitutes could meet their clients "in private." A committee of eminently respectable ladies and gentlemen came to the mayor about this problem, urging him to do something. They had some hope from this quarter, since the mayor had gone on record as being in favor of doing away with the "wine rooms." The "wine room" owners had met this threat by renaming their establishments "restaurants" and substituting tables with salt and pepper shakers for the couches in their stalls; they pointed out that there was no law against dining in mixed company. But when the fashionable contingent went to the mayor for help, they heard what he had to say with disbelief. First he asked them what he should

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do. They had an answer for that one; he was told to send them away. "But where shall I have the police drive them? Over to Detroit or to Cleveland, or merely out into the country? They have to go somewhere you know." Whitlock points out that this

> was a detail that had escaped them, and presently, with his great patience and his great sincerity, he said to them: "I'll make you a proposition. You go and select two of the worst of these women you can find, and I'll agree to take them into my home and provide for them until they can find some other home and some other way of making a living. And then you, each one of you, take one girl into your home, under the same conditions, and together we'll try to find homes for the rest."

They were stunned. "They looked at him, and then looked at each other, and seeing how utterly hopeless this strange man was, they went away." The story in the family has it that the mayor's wife, who had been organist at the Presbyterian church for ten years, was asked to resign because of this meeting. It certainly is the case that she ceased to be church organist at about this time.

Despite the opposition of the Republican machine and the clergy as well, Jones won office by a landslide in 1899 as an Independent candidate for mayor. One member of the clergy was quoted as saying he would rather vote for the Devil himself than for Sam Jones. At his death, amid all the eulogies, one priest publicly expressed the doubt that many of his colleagues had felt over the years: that the life of Golden Rule Jones wasn't quite Christianity. According to Father Muehlenbeck in the *Toledo News-Bee* the week after Jones's death, "Mayor Jones lacked a real Christian education. For a time I believed him to be a pantheist; he often seemed to me to be a mere naturalist, not understanding and not caring much for the supernatural order. He seemed to believe in Jesus Christ as a man, but did not seem to be so sure of Jesus as 'God from God, light from light'. . . ."

Jones was, and is, as hard to pin down with a spiritual label as he was with a political one. "I am afraid I would shock you," he writes to an old friend he had not seen in a long time, "were I to spend the day with you. One of the first things I would tell you would be that I am afraid I am losing faith in, and heart with, the church." Of course, as the author of *If Christ Came to Chicago* (1899) would say, losing heart with the church does not a pantheist or naturalist make. His doubt in the church extended far enough that he did not have his third son, Mason, baptized. Bishop Edward Jones, Mason's son, finally did baptize him late in life at his father's request. The only claim Samuel M. Jones was willing to make for himself was that he "did his best." He made no claim to be a

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theologian. In a letter to his first mother-in-law (one of my great-great-grandmothers), he writes that he finds himself in sympathy with Henry Ward Beecher, the influential Congregational minister and early abolitionist. He begins by quoting him:

> "Perhaps those who have gone before are not separated at all, but are here with quickened perceptions and enlarged powers, still abiding the work that interested them when they were present in bodily form." I do not know whether this is sound theology or not; I do not know whether it is spiritualism or not; indeed I do not care; it is a thought that I have often taken pleasure in dwelling upon, and it seems to me quite as reasonable as many more commonly accepted theories in regard to life after the change that we call death.

I don't know if it is sound theology or not, but, if he was right, I like to think that both Samuel M. Jones and my father know of the work that currently interests me. Jean Strouse tells the story of visiting Alice James's grave when she was at work on her biography. Much to her surprise she found herself crying and telling Alice—as the James family and friends had told her a hundred years earlier—that she was there to take care of her. Jean Strouse writes that "all these emotional responses that you have as a biographer are important parts of the work. If you can hold yourself still and watch them, you'll learn an enormous amount about your subject. Because that's not just a story about me. It's also a story about Alice." So now, as I work on great-grandfather's biography, I find myself holding still and watching.

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Clement Greenberg—The Critic and His Artists

SANFORD SCHWARTZ

I

Perception for perception, Clement Greenberg is the greatest American art critic, yet the first two volumes of his collected work—*Perceptions and Judgments, 1939–1944*, and *Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949* (University of Chicago Press), which have been edited by John O'Brian—have a dampening effect. These writings are primarily about art from the Impressionist era through the emergence after the Second World War of the American Abstract Expressionists. The books are treasure troves of descriptions of works of art, of analyses of the relation between an artist's character and his work and between an individual and his culture. But Greenberg is also a maddeningly theory-bound writer, and you put down his pieces feeling that you have been through a fight between a critic who is an intuitive genius and a forbidding character. It comes out a draw.

Clement Greenberg is the author of *Art and Culture* (1961). It is a very selective grouping of his essays from the nineteen-forties and fifties and the most influential book about art of the past twenty-five years. (It is also, besides a few slim picture books, his only previous work.) Writing about European and American painters and sculptors and many general issues, including collage and the nature of abstraction, Greenberg saw a sense of mission and direction in twentieth-century art. In an unadorned and rhythmic style that resembled Hemingway, Greenberg wrote as a combined appreciator-and-theorist. His prose had an authority. Unlike other art writers, he commanded the attention both of artists, who felt that in his emphasis on the formal aspects of art, on how artworks are made, he got unusually close to the studio experience, and of a largely political and literary, or, at least, a non-art audience—an audience that is often suspicious of the art world. Greenberg was the first American to dwell on the importance of "tradition" and a "world-class" art; he was the first to call some art "major" and to dismiss most as "minor." He was the first American art writer to look at art as a series of movements or styles, each of which would supersede the one that came before it. His essays weren't primarily about the Abstract Expressionists, and Greenberg hardly intended merely to boost them, but, no matter what his subject, he seemed to suggest that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century styles had culminated in the new American painting and sculpture and that "world-class" art in general was now in the hands of American culture.

Greenberg's heyday was the fifties, when he was associated with such newly eminent artists as Jackson Pollock and David Smith and their immediate successors, primarily Morris Louis. From the early sixties on, Greenberg wrote increasingly less about contemporary art, and when he did he generally said that the latest developments weren't good; but that didn't entirely dim his stature or that of *Art and Culture*. Greenberg set in motion a way of thinking about art among Americans that, in many ways, has remained in place. He is hardly a fan of Pop art, Minimalism, Conceptual art, Post-Minimalism, the recent Neo-expressionism, or any of the numerous smaller movements of these

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years, yet he is the spiritual father of all of them. And while his specific ideas have become less crucial, *Art and Culture* has remained, I think, a book that young artists and writers discover with enthusiasm. It is the successor to Robert Henri's *The Art Spirit*, the classic collection, published in the twenties, of this painter's sayings, lectures, and notes. The two books are dissimilar in many ways, but they are alike in being calls to action. *The Art Spirit* spoke to Americans at a time when being true to one's instincts was a revolutionary thing. *Art and Culture* spoke to Americans at a time when possessing a cool and worldly attitude was what really mattered.

In his long and eagerly awaited collected works, Greenberg is a grander—and also a more fragile and irritating—figure than the author of *Art and Culture*. (Two more volumes, covering 1950 through 1969, have been announced.) His range is staggering; he describes the achievements and failures of all sorts of artists from many periods with a streaming ease. Yet there is a sour, nagging, and burned-off quality about him, and his feeling for the "direction" of art now seems to be part of a personal need to sift out, to compare, to measure, to rank. Greenberg writes as a shrewd, rather impatient—and humorless—power broker. He shows little emotion; whether he praises or damns, he writes with the same quiet, controlled, evenly strong tone. His voice is that of a court chamberlain or secretary of state. He is a formidable opponent. But he is not a prince or a king; he writes as a custodian of power, someone who senses that some ultimate power will never be in his hands. Greenberg's fame is based on his support of radical, tough new art, but his insights are bound to a harsh and unliberating view of existence. Art for him is a symbol of immortality and rules. He might be called a poet of the Academy of life—of the ultimate beauty of the Proper.

Between 1939, when he was thirty, and 1949, when he gave up full-time reviewing, Greenberg wrote a regular column for the *Nation* and frequently appeared in *Partisan Review* and the *New York Times Book Review*. Especially in the early forties, he reviewed many writers; there are very good pieces in these compactly designed collections on, among others, Randall Jarrell, Franz Kafka, Saul Bellow, and Marianne Moore, and he is interesting on an Anthony Tudor ballet, too.

Greenberg wrote mostly about art, though. There are estimates here of, among others, Degas, Delacroix, the Flemish primitives, Klee, Ingres, Kandinsky, Hartley, Pissarro, Picasso, Thurber, Currier and Ives prints, Lachaise, numerous cartoonists, Miró, Matisse, Braque, Leonardo da Vinci, Gauguin, Winslow Homer, Beckmann, Pollock, David Smith, David Hare, Arnold Friedman, Motherwell, and Marin. There are essays on abstract art, primitive painters, modern sculpture, collage, and Edward Weston and photography in general. Most of these pieces are short, and Greenberg often reviewed the first shows these artists had in New York. There may have been a vague consensus at the time about, say, Rouault or Arshile Gorky or Henry Moore, but Greenberg, one feels, was courageous in presenting his emphatic opinions, and it is amazing how fresh his opinions—and his opinions about literature, too—still are.

Greenberg's special quality is that he can, so to speak, get inside the skin of a painting, drawing, or sculpture, and describe the thickness or thinness of the lines, or the texture of the oil, or the look of a face in a portrait, and draw enormous conclusions from it. "There was something over-ripe and slightly vicious" about the period of the Flemish primitives, he writes; there is "a rather profane detachment" in van Eyck, and a "certain malaise is to be detected in van der Weyden." It is "characteristic of the Dutch school," he notes, "that the very workmanship of the artist, the good quality and permanence of his pigments, glazes, and varnishes, the skill, patience, and conscientiousness with which he has applied them—all these contribute somehow to the pleasure." Talking about Eakins, he mentions the painter's images of rowers on the Schuylkill and the "throbbing, suppressed luminosity of the sunlight"—and with these words we freshly see and feel the sadness and tension of Eakins's art, the man himself, and his era.

Throughout these volumes there are observations which we might not agree with (and might not even understand at first) but which give issues a faceted, jewel-like complexity—as when Greenberg says, "It took the brilliance and color of the West Indies to justify Homer's daring to himself. He had not in-

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tended to innovate. The brilliance was there before him; he painted it. And it was all part of the logic by which his naively possessed but far from naive gift had to develop." Writing about Chagall in 1947, Greenberg says that the painter "had no longer enough to say to fill out his style, which is left without strains or tensions. . . . It is Chagall's tragedy that he has never had much more than his genius."

With artist after artist, Greenberg describes works and offers a judgment, and we feel, Yes, this cannot be bettered. Everything that can leave us dissatisfied with Calder, despite how much we may like individual pieces, is in Greenberg's saying, "This particular world lacks history. Lots of things go on in it but nothing happens." Bonnard, we read, "paints more suavely and generously than Matisse or Picasso, but he does not establish the bold, lucid, incandescent structures by which those two masters fix us to the spot, touch new feelings, and expand our consciousness of the possibilities of art." Greenberg says about de Chirico that his art "is a literary feat sustained for only a moment's view. Then it dies." This is perfect; each time we encounter de Chirico's pictures we are excited and then, after a while, they "die" on us. About Picasso and Miró, he says, "In Picasso, who is indeed a more profound artist, we can sense a dissatisfaction with the resources of his medium; something beyond painting yearns to be expressed, something which color and line laid on a flat surface can never quite achieve. Miró, on the contrary, seeks the quintessential painting, is content to stay at the center of that exhilaration which is only felt in making marks and signs." One of Greenberg's most amazing comments is from a 1944 piece on Marsden Hartley (amazing because the words have proven prophetic to a tee). Hartley was "not a great artist, and, as I have said, he was radically uneven, but his reputation will grow as time passes. The limitations of the art are in some peculiar way redeemed by the large character of the man."

The core of Greenberg's writing, though, is dreary. His large subject is the development of modern art, and we know this tale too well. Greenberg wants us to see that there is a single way to make a successful work of art: when the painter, say, is not concerned with the storytelling aspect of his picture or his personal feelings, but deals solely with the properties of his medium—the nature of paint, the literal "flatness" of the canvas. Greenberg also wants us to admire the artists and the tradition of the School of Paris. He sees Paris in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries as the place and time when art and life reached a peak: this was the beginning of modern art and of the modern, or industrial, age.

Greenberg is convinced that there is a mainstream of art—art that matters, that is immortal. This tradition goes back to Giotto, continues with Delacroix, Ingres, and Courbet, and comes closer to us with the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Fauves, and Cubists. Since the late twenties, though (he continues), art has gone to the dogs; Surrealism has taken over, and Surrealist art is not good. Life in general has become iffy, vulgarized. People are on a vacation from the higher purposes. Surveying the scene in the forties, Greenberg points to the still-active Matisse and Picasso; they represent the golden age that is all but gone. There are also Miró and Mondrian, who carry on the tradition. But he senses that it is the young, largely unknown American painters, who have learned the lessons of the Europeans (through looking at their work in reproductions), who will make the needed breakthroughs. He isn't positive about this; most of the new work, he says, is terrible, actually. He is certain, though, that if these Americans make an original art it will extend Cubism, as Cubism extended the radical art that produced it. And the logical extension of Cubism is a purely abstract art.

Greenberg's individual points are irrefutable. His approach is political; Cubism for him is, in effect, the Russian Revolution (he refers to himself as a socialist), and he clearly applies to art the principles of Marx and of German philosophy in general, where there is a "necessity" and a logical flow to history. Regardless of his bias, we read and nod in agreement. We probably think of the history of art as a single, continuing story and believe that the most important new art is often the work that doesn't even seem to be "art" at first and is about a new way to use paint, bronze, or any material. Most of us have similar notions about which art is, as he puts it, "major" or "irrelevant," and can agree, too—though blankly, unenthusiastically—with his 1948 es-

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timate of Cubism as the "great phenomenon, the epoch-making feat of twentieth-century art."

And Greenberg's clarity and assurance are invigorating at first. Absorb his lessons and you feel ready to look at anything and put it in a slot. When he says of a Matisse that "in it Matisse demonstrates again . . . that he uses black better than anyone else since Manet, not excepting Braque," or when Greenberg says (in 1948) that Picasso is "further than ever from threatening" Matisse's "position as the greatest master of the twentieth century," we think, Wow, this is fun. Greenberg's prose is an elevated form of the chat we all make at a show, when we simply say what we feel (and it is usually negative). Greenberg's tone epitomizes—he may have created—the "New York" approach to art. This is a savvy, street-smart, tough-guy attitude. Some of the most prominent figures in American art in the generation after Greenberg's have a similar "professionalized" sense of art; one thinks of the painter Frank Stella, the sculptor Donald Judd, the museum director William Rubin. They—and many artists in the present generation too—believe that "important" art is abstract in nature (even if the artist includes representational images), that art flows in a direct historical line from movement to movement, and that this tradition is always being attacked by retrograde forces: literary or nostalgic styles, which are meaningless little detours.

It is satisfying, and second nature for most of us, to believe this. Art loses any sense of preciousness; it becomes a racier and manlier occupation—a combination of sports, business, politics. But after a dose of this talk in Greenberg's pieces, one feels warped. In a typical passage, he writes that Dubuffet and other artists "may escape the paralysis of culture via Klee and the deliberate surrender to infantile experience, but they do little to vitalize tradition; Dubuffet is a first-rate painter but he leaves nothing to the future of painting." We think, Right, brilliant—Dubuffet's work does feel like a dead-end street. Yet Greenberg makes "tradition" a cardboard thing; he robs it of its mystery and vastness. He says (in 1948) that Cubism is "now the only school." This is monstrous. It kills a crucial element in art: that it is about freedom.

Despite what we think of Greenberg's ideas, we are drawn to his prose in itself; it is exquisite and mesmerizing. He seems to give every word in an essay an equal emphasis. His prose has the qualities he calls our attention to in works of art (and in the work of certain writers he reviews, such as Anna Seghers and Franz Kafka). Greenberg likes paintings where there is no slackness or "falling away" toward the edges and where the various elements create a right-on-the-surface tension, and his essays are built that way. He begins a piece right in the center of an important point, and he concludes on the same firm note. There are no fancy passages or stagey upbeats (or downbeats) at the end. He sustains a single clenched note from beginning to end. Each review is another report from the front.

Considering how finely crafted his writing is, one finds his repetitiousness shocking. All writers become repetitious when read straight through, but Greenberg touches on his related themes in virtually every piece. It is unfair, of course, to generalize about his work based on only these first two volumes. But the articles which were written after 1949 that are reprinted in *Art and Culture* revolve around the same points.

Greenberg is a bully. Yet he gets under your skin. Even after we are versed in his theories, we hunger to hear his opinions—his string of perceptions—about an artist. He's wily. More than most critics, he forces you to argue with him; he makes you clarify your own positions.

Greenberg may be the one American art critic to formulate an idea of beauty. It is difficult to embrace all of it, but parts are compelling; he seems to describe the art he would make if he were a professional artist. He wants an art that has the sensuous, physical quality of modern French painting (and when he mentions French painting he means, too, French culture and the texture of French life; the only time he becomes moony—and sounds dated—is when he talks about Paris, especially the Paris of yesteryear). He also believes that the truly great artwork is anonymous. It is not about the personality of the person who made it, and, as an object, it is airy, flat, screenlike. He talks so much about "unity"—about a balance between drawing and color, near and far, light and dark—that a model work rises before us as we read. It is

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some combination of a large, imageless painting, an immense grill-like architecture, and the spirit of an old, powerful state or kingdom. We see something brilliant, glowing, godlike.

Greenberg presents, one can feel, a Jewish idea of beauty (he identifies himself as a Jew in a few places). One can also believe that when he writes about an artist and his "culture" he might, additionally, be writing about the individual Jew and what "culture" is to him: the great, dazzling Gentile city, which the Jew wants to conquer and to feel at home in. Some of Greenberg's liveliest and most absorbing comments are about how being Jewish affects writers and artists, and, in addition to Kafka and Saul Bellow, he writes about Scholom Aleichem, Arthur Koestler, Peggy Guggenheim, and a book on the Jewish joke. Greenberg describes his own most tangible qualities—his directness and honesty (which can be a showy honesty)—in the Scholom Aleichem piece when he says that the ghetto "taught the Jew to keep his eye on the main thing, the main thing in any interest, not only his own. Therefore his impatience with etiquette. . . . Why deny that man lives by cruel competition in this particular world?"

Greenberg sees Jews as either total winners or as a flock of sheep. He says (with such an extreme aggressiveness that it is cartoonish) that "it is possible that by 'world-historical' standards the European Jew represents a higher type of human being than any yet achieved in history. I do not say that this is so, but I say it is possible and that there is much to argue for its possibility." Elsewhere, though, he writes of the smallness and isolation of Jews. "No people on earth," he says in 1944, "are more correct, more staid, more provincial, more commonplace, more inexperienced; none observe more strictly the letter of every code that is respectable; no people do so completely and habitually what is expected of them. . . ." Greenberg looks at artists in these two different ways. There are certain artists of the School of Paris, who are unknowable deities, and there are provincial artists, who have, for him, a chief characteristic: ultimately, they're not good enough.

It is a charge to read Greenberg on, say, Delacroix; the painter, he believes, is a paragon of talent, learning, technique, intellect, personal manners—he is "Paris." Greenberg "looks through" these awesome Parisians, though; he assumes that we, too, believe that their art is superb, and his pieces leave us shortchanged. We can see why he would call Matisse the greatest painter of the century. Matisse is stimulating about virtually nothing; his subject is the process by which colors and lines balance off each other to make a pleasing whole. The chief thing we retain from Greenberg on Matisse, though, is his sense of the man's toughness. The Frenchman, we hear, is "cold, undistracted, and full of arrogant purpose." (This is Greenberg's own tone.) It is a relief to hear Matisse called cold; other writers don't say it. (They don't say anything interesting about Matisse; he usually comes across as a blank.) But Greenberg's general comments about the painter, both in these reviews and in his little 1953 picture book on Matisse—it is comprised of a short essay followed by notes on some twenty plates—are forgettable. Greenberg's other picture books —*Joan Miró* (1948) and *Hofmann* (1961) —are also about figures he believes are preeminent, and these studies, too, leave little impression.

Greenberg is more substantial on (to him) lesser artists. His finest writing is on Marin, Klee, and Homer. They are highly gifted and satisfying painters, and Klee had a worldwide influence. Yet, as Greenberg might say, they are underfed; they exist in cultures that do not give them enough. Klee is a touchstone for him. Greenberg can best see the majestic, superior qualities in art and life by looking at Klee, who (he says) just misses possessing them.

There are marvelous passages on the limitations of Klee. Writing about the differences between Klee and Picasso, Greenberg says, in effect, that the best art doesn't have a private or confessional meaning and isn't about one's fears; it isn't a consolation for us in those times when we feel cut off from society and life. The great artist must be arrogant, even ruthless; his work flows from something contented and sensuous, and we respond to it when we are most confident about ourselves. Greenberg's ultimate artist is a "dandy." He is stoical, unafraid, without illusions. He is also a thoroughgoing professional who would never violate the traditions of his craft by making paintings that were "personal."

The most satisfying part of Greenberg's

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aesthetic is that he gives us a new way to look at all of art. When he says that Cubism is the "purest and most unified of all art styles since Tiepolo and Watteau," we suddenly see the thread he is after (and the effect is to make us think about what tradition or "look" in art we especially love). A Cubist picture, a Tiepolo, and a Watteau all have the same blending of foreground and background, the same lack of strong contrasts between light and shadow, the same chalky-and-silky texture. A Tiepolo, a Watteau, and a Cubist Picasso or Braque share an emotional evenness, a lack of strife, an intelligence and poise—a way of saying, "The actual story here doesn't matter."

These Old Master and twentieth-century artworks are more about drawing than color, and Greenberg's aesthetic comes, it seems, from someone whose first love is drawing. (In his introduction, O'Brian says that Greenberg "drew obsessively from the age of four on.") The person whose sensibility is formed from working with pencil or pen tends to see art as an even distribution of tones, because when you put lines down on a sheet of white paper, you automatically think about the dark versus the big white mass. This is a simplification of his thinking, but when Greenberg sees a picture where the various elements jut in different directions and each element keeps its own, independent character, he believes the picture is unsuccessful. In a sense, his conception of "unity" is literal and naive. With his rules of composition, he occasionally sounds as though he were a drawing instructor at an old-time art academy. Some part of Greenberg's response to art is, in the worst sense, shallow and flat.

And Greenberg's distinction about how we "see" old art versus modern art feels wrong. This may not be a large point, but it raises questions about much of what he says. He believes that, in painting from the Renaissance up to Cubism, we looked "into" the painted scene before us; there was an illusion of deep space. Cubism, he says, freed art to be "about itself," about its surface alone; Cubism created a new airless space. This is true, but in practice I think the situation is exactly the opposite. If we are stopped in a museum by a Renaissance picture or a Courbet, it is probably because the picture is surprisingly flat, surfacy; some element might be pleasingly out of sync, or the artist appears self-conscious in a modern way. Most radical, abstract twentieth-century artworks, though, are alive to the degree that we want to linger with, to look "into" them. A challenging new work often seems to present a to-be-deciphered way to approach contemporary reality; there is a mystery about its meaning.

I think that artworks are looked at in primarily aesthetic terms—in Greenberg's terms—once they have lost their bite and entered the museum realm, the land of the past. Greenberg unwittingly wants to cauterize whatever makes new art new. He wants to jump immediately to the museum stage, where the new work must compete with the Giottos and Titians. Greenberg's infatuation with surface and flatness amounts to someone saying, "The immediate emotions aroused by a work of art mean nothing in the long run, and the long run is the only thing that counts." What Greenberg doesn't see is that taste changes over generations. I don't think, for instance, that people now have the spellbound and reverent regard for Cubism that he had. Cubist works are elegant, but they are also witty, weird, dreary, and a touch gimmicky. Far from being flat and without a conventional light, as Greenberg would have them, the pictures often seem to be images of gadgety metal constructions that reflect a dim outside light. With their various pats of muted color and translucent skin of little compartmentalizing lines, some of the Picassos and Braques seem to present a sci-fi netherworld.

Greenberg makes one point about Cubism that is still fresh, though. He says that the Cubist style is bigger than the artist who makes the actual Cubist pictures. This feels right, and it ties together in a canny way with his desire for an anonymous, personality-less art. We can imagine how, when Picasso made his Cubist pictures, he was running on automatic as he "filled in" the Cubist grid. When Jackson Pollock made his famous "drip" paintings, he seems not to have had time to think about himself either. In the movies and photos of him at work, Pollock, whose canvas was on the floor, virtually dances onto his paintings, and, as he flings the paint with a stick, "loses" himself. Greenberg notes the similarity between the Cubists and Pollock in this gentle and beautiful sentence: "There is something of the same encasement in a style that, so to speak, feels for the painter and

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relieves him of the anguish and awkwardness of invention, leaving his gift free to function almost automatically." Reading this sentence, one wonders when the next significant style will arise that will "feel for" and "relieve" the painter in this way.

The dramatic high point of these volumes is Greenberg on Pollock. There are reviews of the painter's first six shows, beginning in 1943, plus mentions of Pollock here and there, and Greenberg's idea of the painter is so much like ours that we have to remind ourselves that these criticisms were written forty years ago. Greenberg was on the lookout for a new artist (or for a school of new artists) who would "do more" with Cubism and whose work could hang on the wall, on equal terms, with the great Europeans. Greenberg wanted an art that presented a difficult, unobvious—but not esoteric—beauty, one that wasn't easy to like or know.

Pollock still represents these qualities. He is still an artist we don't quite "know." I believe we would prefer not to "know" him fully, because we don't want to risk being disappointed by him. I think we want to keep him a pure symbol—a symbol of epic striving and of vulnerability. This symbolic part of Pollock is most felt in his pictures from the early and mid-forties, from before he discovered his drip method. Such 1943 pictures as *The She-Wolf* and *Guardians of the Secret*, which have seemingly random abstract markings and remnants of mythological images, aren't altogether satisfying. There is something arbitrary about the various remnants; the pictures can feel like fake ruins. But the pictures contain, perhaps even more than his successful drip paintings, the point of Pollock's work. In them, Pollock resists the human—the easier—desire to make a coordinated, rhythmic thing; the pictures are so many stalemated battles between the wills to beauty and to ugliness.

Pollock has the same phantomlike presence in these Greenberg volumes. Greenberg never devotes too much space to Pollock; he merely "comes across" the painter as he goes from show to show. Yet Greenberg, who was thirty-four when he first began reviewing the artist, who was thirty-one, wants us to know that Pollock is the most important new painter anywhere, even when individual works fail. (It may take more courage for a beginning critic to praise a beginning and virtually unknown artist—at least, in the authoritative and fearless way that Greenberg did—than for that artist to paint the pictures.) It is a measure of the purity and intensity of Greenberg's desires for a new art that when he met that art in the flesh, so to speak, all he felt he had to say was, "You're it."

Greenberg's own achievement has the breadth, ambition, and worldliness of the finest Abstract Expressionist paintings. His work has similar limitations. Looking at a couple of Barnett Newmans, say, or Mark Rothkos, we can be awed, but a full show is monotonous. It is all the same thing. The Ab Ex story is, in part, how the American artist was determined to join, by one colossal leap, the ranks of the great Europeans. The American achieved it, but he created a facade of greatness; the Europeans' ideas were rethought and turned into a single "sign" or "look" or way of painting. Rothko, Newman, and the rest shove their power to us all at once; there seems to be little in reserve. Their emotions always vibrate at the highest pitch. If we are not on their wavelength, we feel nothing. Their power depends too heavily on the sheer size of their pictures. Van Gogh, Miró, Munch, Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse—and Hartley—give us more to look at and think about; they have more different phases and moods within them.

The individual Ab Ex staked everything on One Idea; once he achieved that idea, he was, very often, locked into repeating himself. In the same way, Greenberg created a one-shot aesthetic, a way of judging art that, I think, left him dissatisfied with all art that wasn't on his track. He presented his sense of what was wrong with current art (and society) and how the situation could be fixed in the second and third essays he published, in 1939 and 1940. If he had written only those pieces, we would know precisely what he stood for. My impression of his work after 1949, when he gave up regular reviewing, is that his ideas about the way to a pure, significant art became all-consuming to him, and individual artists and works of art were reduced to illustrations.

II

In the fifties, sixties, and well into the seventies, Greenberg was a commanding figure for many artists, writers about art, mu-

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seum people, and collectors. You see how magnetic he could be—especially in the first half of the fifties, when his ideas were still being discovered and Pollock and other new abstract painters were becoming known—in the work of Morris Louis, who was recently the subject of a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. It is hard to imagine Louis's art and career—he died in 1962, at forty-nine (of cancer)—without Greenberg. The critic was probably Louis's biggest supporter, and he gave Louis asked-for advice about various works. And Louis's large abstract paintings, which are made by pouring acrylic medium directly onto the canvas and then juggling and shifting the canvas to get the paint to go in the right places—Louis at work must have been a cross between a seamstress and a sail maker—were thought by Greenberg and others to extend the modern tradition of making art about the formal properties of art.

In the years after his death, Louis's reputation was high; every major American museum seemed to exhibit an example or two of his art. Lately, I think he has come to seem a thinner, more purely decorative painter, and the Museum of Modern Art's show was not a crowded event. These stained canvases ought to have a thin, periodish look, and Louis's work in general is not robust; but his finest work can make your chest pound. These pictures are called Veils, mostly because the abstract shapes resemble veils, and they express a sense of sheer physical monumentality—and a drifting, vaporous beauty—that is unlike anything in art. The paintings are generally ten feet or so on a side, and the veil images are clear-cut from yards away, yet the works are especially strong when, as at the Museum of Modern Art, a viewer is surrounded by many of them in a small, enveloping, intimate space. The Louis exhibition made me admire Greenberg more, and it also put an ironic twist on his writing. His goal was to revitalize the worldly, sensuous, and disillusioned art of the School of Paris, and yet, perhaps because he laid down the plans for this new cosmopolitan art so precisely, the work that was inspired by him reflects his powerful faith, not his literal goals. Louis's painting is in many ways a fulfillment of Greenberg's ideas, yet Louis is at his best a lyric, rhapsodic, even religious artist.

There are few biographical details about Louis, but from those details and his work, he is someone we feel we know. He was alternately capable of rash, all-or-nothing acts and of being too knotted up to push anything forward. Louis lived for most of his life in Baltimore and Washington, D. C. In the photo of him in the Museum of Modern Art's catalogue, he has shy, sensuous good looks, with glistening dark eyes and full lips. Like Pollock—they were the same age—he and his wife had no children. As a young man, he changed his name—he was born Morris Louis Bernstein—and he was a fanatic for work; when he became interested in a motif he made endless variations on it, yet he periodically destroyed quantities of his pictures. He was known to few people in the art world, and his working methods were a secret.

Louis became himself, as it were, one day in 1954, on a trip to New York. At this point he was an unknown painter in his early forties who was devoted to Matisse, Picasso, and the issues of modern art, but he was out of touch with the latest developments and had never seen an actual Pollock. One feels that he might have been desperate because, after more than twenty years of work, he had achieved virtually nothing, but that he might also have been proud to be an outsider and not merely another respectable artist with a respectable body of work. On that day, he met, among others, Greenberg and Franz Kline. They went to galleries, and Louis saw his first Pollocks. He, Greenberg, and the rest then spent five hours at Helen Frankenthaler's studio, where they discussed her painting *Mountains and Sea*. Then in her early twenties and seriously involved with the development of modern art, Frankenthaler made this abstract picture by letting the colors soak into the raw, or unprimed, canvas. Louis believed, as did Greenberg, that the future of advanced painting was this soaking or staining method. Louis went back to Washington with an idea of how he might alter the future of art.

Louis's early mature paintings—they were made around 1959—are his best. They show veils or curtains of overlapping colors that seem to billow up from the bottom, or swoosh down from the top, of the canvas. Surrounding the swoosh of color on three sides is an irregular margin of ivory-white untouched canvas. The Veils recall mountains, geysers, waterfalls, forests, or whales rising out of the water—whales that loom over us. His pale pur-

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ple, dark green, black, copper-orange, red-brown, and pale blue suggest the colors of the Pacific Northwest; the color is like some substance that, out of reach of the sun's rays, is always moist.

Louis's stain technique produces the softened and far away look of something seen through a screen door, and, perhaps because we are aware of the painter's early death, the Veils have an air of muted tragedy. The small bit of ivory-white that surrounds the billowing colors, though, gives the pictures an unexpected taut quality. The white is like a border on a photograph or postcard; we might be looking at a close-up photo of a detail of an art nouveau vase that has been cropped in a too-close way and then blown up to a mammoth size. Seeing photos or postcards this enormous is disorienting and thrilling.

It is often said that Louis's art has nothing of his "personality" or "feelings." His paintings look the way they do because he chose a particular method of painting. His work is a forerunner (by some ten years) of Conceptual art, which says that the artist's idea is itself the artwork, and of Process art, which says that whatever comes from a predetermined way to use certain materials is the work of art. Yet Louis's best pictures hold us because they have an emotional resonance. The surfaces of his pictures are, literally and poetically, thin-skinned and defenseless. A Veil painting is an image of something cloaked and smothered and also of yearning. Exactly what Louis yearns for is not, of course, evident. Yet, knowing the circumstances of his life, one believes that, like Greenberg, Louis's work has to do with the intertwining themes of a Jew's desire to be powerful in America and an American's desire to be powerful in relation to the great figures of the European past.

Louis is thought, in Greenberg's terms, to extend the tradition of master painters that goes back through Matisse to Delacroix and the rest. But Louis is the opposite of Greenberg's School of Paris masters. He is closer to a William Blake or a de Chirico—an artist whose work comes out of his head in a virtually complete state at one moment. Louis's working methods were a bit like Blake's. Louis made his enormous pictures in one of the two rooms of his and his wife's small Washington apartment. He didn't have the space to view and judge his pictures from a distance, and he lived to see very few of his canvases stretched. Once he perfected his stain technique, he made hundreds of pictures, and the majority were simply rolled up and put in a closet. He could have been, like Blake, a painter-writer hunched over a desk. And one imagines that Louis liked these working conditions. By temperament, he was a literary artist. "Modernism" or "formal qualities" for him were what mythological and historical beings were for Blake.

Louis's art declined after the Veils. In the work from his last few years he is a man with an idea about how to make pictures who isn't sure where to go with his idea. He made Furl paintings, where the stained colors—red, green, blue, yellow—are single lines that descend from the left and right sides to the bottom on otherwise empty, untouched, unprimed white canvas. The lines, which appear to drip down as you look at them, are like a few strands from a Pollock maze of drips that have been gigantically magnified and then neatly paired off to the left and the right of the canvas. The Furls are like images of vast Arctic valleys, and thinking about them and about the vibrant white parts of the Veils, one believes that Louis is essentially a painter of white—that he uses color as a way to shape and enhance the white, untouched part of the canvas.

Like Claude Lorrain landscapes, the Furls are pleasingly grand and empty. They are also obvious and picturesque, and Louis's other late work is glaringly obvious. Louis's last paintings are called Stripes; there are yellow, red, green, blue, or tan stripes, which are set—up, down, or at angles—on plain white, raw canvases. These paintings are tinny.

Louis's pictures became increasingly like products, and in this they are similar to the work of many artists Greenberg was associated with from the mid-fifties on: besides Louis and Helen Frankenthaler, such painters as Jules Olitski and Kenneth Noland, and numerous sculptors who made welded-steel pieces. My memory is that Greenberg didn't review these artists, as he had reviewed Chagall, Picasso, Pollock. Rather, in pieces that generally lacked the names of individuals, he wrote about the way art was supposed to, or not supposed to, develop. And it was clear that Olitski, Frankenthaler, and the rest were filling his orders.

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Frankenthaler, especially in her early pictures, which have quietly scrumptious surfaces, is a good painter. She doesn't stun us, as Pollock and Louis do; her abstract pictures are about relations between colors, textures, lines, and shapes. Her colors and her various blots, swipes, and trailing brush strokes suggest branches and leaves being bent by the wind, or grasses waving in a marsh. She can remind us of the loveliness of a hidden moment or place in nature; but she is not, to use Greenberg's word, a "major" artist. Her shows are often dissatisfying; the pictures feel interchangeable. It's one handsome work after another. But Frankenthaler is frequently a pleasant surprise in group shows or museum collections, where her individual picture, which seems to be about artistic intelligence for its own sake, not only holds its own but enhances the other art in the room. Her work is an illustration of the artistic good manners that Greenberg, with his vision of great art as stemming from a brotherhood of Parisian dandies, believed was crucial to a "major" culture.

The other artists who followed Greenberg's precepts are far less satisfying. The work of these painters (whose abstractions are called Color Field) and sculptors (whose pieces recall David Smith) is Greenberg's comeuppance for believing that he could chart the direction of art. His desire for an emotionally damped-down and well-behaved formalist art was translated into pictures and sculptures that have little sense of struggle or of an inner life; they're faceless objects. His desire for a worldly and grandly impersonal art helped produce works that merely look expensive and are in "good taste."

Frank Stella is not as closely associated with Greenberg as are these others, but he reflects more of Greenberg's spirit. Greenberg is not an admirer of his, and Stella, in his recent *Working Space*, the book of his 1984–85 Norton Lectures at Harvard, spends much of his time refuting Greenberg. Stella says, in effect, "Look, the flatness thing, the reliance on the shallow space and pretty surfaces of modern French painting—it has failed. Those of us who believe in abstraction hit a high note in our art in the sixties, but by 1970 abstract art was in a rut and now it's moribund. What can we do?" Stella thinks that Morris Louis is admirable, and he notes that Frankenthaler and the rest were among the exciting painters of the sixties, but he is not warmed by the artists who followed Greenberg's lead. His best crack about their art is that it is "suburban." Stella never mentions Greenberg's name, which may be an intended joke. Perhaps Stella is also joking when he connects Bernard Berenson with the belief that modern art is characterized by shallowness, flatness, and an emphasis on the physical, material quality of art. Does any art writer have less to do with the development of modern art than Bernard Berenson? And does Stella know that Greenberg admires Berenson's work?

Stella is quietly desperate about the state of abstract art, but his situation is even emptier than he realizes because, while he talks a lot about art from the Renaissance through the sixties, he doesn't seem to know where art has gone since then. He continually worries about the "future," but he doesn't have the vaguest interest in how the generation after his looks at art. He is really just talking to himself. His most vivid point is about the need for "space" in a painting, whether the work is abstract or representational, and his liveliest pages are the early ones, on Caravaggio, who is his hero. Stella loves the "real space" in Caravaggio's pictures and the way this painter makes everything clear and muscular, full of thrusts and theatrical, and (although Stella doesn't quite say this) emotionally simple.

Stella sets up Caravaggio, the original Pow! artist, as an alternative to Greenberg. But the only real difference between Stella and Greenberg is that Stella likes painting where you feel you can reach into the picture and put your hand behind what faces you and Greenberg likes painting where that doesn't feel possible. Otherwise, they both see art history as a single story—a struggle toward some goal—and they judge an artist less for his actual work than for how he "advances" the story.

And Stella, in his art, embodies Greenberg's exaggerated self-assurance. From shortly after college, Stella has made series after series of paintings, each somewhat different from, and seemingly a development on, the one before. (He does the same thing as a writer; he is quite a stylist, but he makes the same few points again and again, saying them a bit differently each time.) Stella's pictures are shrewd, energetic, and forceful; he has a passion for order. He is a sort of inventor-

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tycoon, like a Henry Ford or a Hollywood mogul of the thirties. His art is usually bracing, but it isn't moving or puzzling; it is always a more or less successful demonstration of a way to make a picture. It is fascinating that the central figure of his book is an Old Master painter, because Stella himself is the contemporary Old Master—the vigorous, no-nonsense, public-spirited decorator—that Greenberg as much as calls for.

Greenberg is a more complex creator than the artists who were influenced by him and than most of the artists who were his contemporaries. He is the most arrogant of critics, yet his ideal artwork is a selfless thing. He is equally determined to glorify the idea of the grand, blandly impersonal artist and to show what is limited about the talented provincial; but he himself is neither. He is an in-between man. In the piece on Scholom Aleichem, there is a wonderful illustration of ambivalence about glory. "The Jews," Greenberg writes, "like cities, gregarious life, and the fluidities of commerce . . . at the same time they yearn to stop liking them."

There is a fearfulness and an uncertainty underlying Greenberg's criticism. His relentless concern with laws and the past and "tradition" is, in simpler terms, a concern with what will live. Greenberg's pieces seem to ask, "Will this artist be remembered?" He might be asking, "Will I be remembered?" He describes his own method when he says about Franz Kafka that he "weighs, ponders, and questions everything from many sides in the effort to establish certainties that will survive chance and history."

Greenberg says that Arnold Friedman's pictures embody "something of this age's abiding emotions: the sad remoteness of nature, the anonymity of cities, and the permanence of art." These are the abiding emotions of Greenberg's work.

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Baize Doors

Craig Raine

She had forgotten the bellows again
and the family were due back from church.
Her mind was on the gardener's boy,

who'd left her in the lurch
the Friday before: without his reference,
leaving only a collar stud behind

at the back of a paper-lined drawer,
and that drawn length of linen blind
which curtseyed gently in her hand

then vanished as she let it go.
She knew that she must be alive
by her breath on the window

when she deliberately adjusted
a hairpin, before going downstairs . . .
The bellows were kept in the kitchen

beyond the bottle-green baize
where the floral carpet stopped
and the stone steps started.

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No one had ever fallen before.
The under-cook was brokenhearted
about the blood and slipped

a *Reynold's News* between her floor
and the wide-open skull. Morgan, the valet,
was dispatched for the doctor,

who turned the face to find
a phrenologist's head: the stop press
transferred backwards on the brain.

The gardener's boy was on her mind.
A pair of bellows prayed in the hearth.
The kitchen fire fell to its death.

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Les Natures Profondement Bonnes Sont Toujours Indecises

KAY RYAN

One strong squirt
of will and the world
fills with direction.
All roads go Roman.
The path not taken
is not kept open.
There is suddenly
a rational waterworks
system. Things are done
as no indecisive person
could do them. Still
there is a population
that likes mistakes and
indecision, guarding
atavisms and anatomical
sports, the hips of snakes,
the wings of the horse.
They do not argue that
this is useful. They
make no mention of the
gene pool. They just
like to think about
these things. They
make them comfortable.

KAY RYAN is the author of *Strangely Marked Metal.* Her work has appeared in the *Kenyon Review*, *Poetry*, and other magazines.

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A Spa in Germany

Tepida, Tenuissima, Simplicissima

RUTH GAY

In Badenweiler the post office closes every weekday between twelve and three, which serves as a signal for what is to come. By 12:30 every shop on the main street has also closed its doors and only the cafés stay drowsily open, even though all the regular visitors will have retreated to their respective hotels, pensions, or apartments for the sacred mid-day rest. If you listen closely, even the birds are silent.

Badenweiler is a modest spa, a town with a year-round population of three thousand, tucked into the southwest corner of Germany. Locally this area is called the Three Corners, because here Switzerland, Germany, and France meet. Basel is only half an hour away by bus, and France has already crossed the border, since "Adieu" is what people say upon parting rather than the customary German "Auf Wiedersehen." There are only two hotels in town that are expensive and a little grand, and whose specialty is extreme comfort, attention to detail, and beautiful service. But then, even the palace of the former grand duke is modest—not larger, indeed, than the villa of a prosperous banker in Wilhelminian Hamburg—and its main floor now serves as the headquarters for the police department.

Unlike other parts of Germany, there are no scars here to remind the visitor of the war, of Hitler, or of the crimes that otherwise haunt the German landscape and that inhibit lighthearted tourism. Here the day takes its imperturbable course in a timeless continuum, defying history and memory. But if quiet middle-class respectability is Badenweiler's link to the past, tradition is thrown to the winds when it comes to the really central display piece of the town—its Kurhaus and the thermal baths. The lavish space and appointments, the buoyant architecture, the sunny gardens and pools, and above all the well-maintained Roman ruins show that at this point no expense was spared. The spa is, after all, the entire source, the heart, of Badenweiler's industry, as it has been since Roman times. There is even occasional documentation to light the way. A Dr. Sulzer in the mid-eighteenth century recommends drinking the waters to his patients "for constipation and most particularly for the evils that afflict the lower body. As a bath, the waters help aching bones and skin eruptions." He concludes his catalogue of praise with three Latin words: *tepida*, *tenuissima*, *simplicissima*—warm, free from impurities, and most clear.

The Romans are still regarded, at least in Germany, as the all-time experts in the art of fine living. Even when encamped in the Teutonic wilderness, the Romans could recognize a thermal spring when they saw one, and they built their hot and cold baths, their *tepidarium* and *frigidarium*, accordingly. If there is one thing that legitimizes the health-giving properties of a spa, it is a Roman ancestor, and every attention is given to preserving his relics.

The contemporary Kurhaus of Badenweiler, whose construction was begun in 1969, is nestled into a hill that is crowned by an extremely ornamental medieval ruin (carefully lit at night) and that terminates at its base in the scientifically managed vestiges of the first-century Roman bath. This has been scru-

✪ RUTH GAY's essays have appeared in *Commentary*, *Dialogue*, *Horizon*, and other magazines.

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pulously excavated, covered over, provided with catwalks, and studied since its discovery in the eighteenth century by experts hoping to fathom its secrets. The most important unanswered riddle remains how the Romans brought the water from the spring to the baths, which cover an area as large as a city block. There are smaller questions, such as why they used local stone for everything except the runoffs from the baths, which are made out of blocks imported from Wales. Or why, in such a small place, the Romans built these huge double baths, laid out symmetrically as mirror images of one another: one of only five in this style in the Roman world, if our guide is to be believed.

The architecture of the contemporary Kurhaus continues the tradition of stone in some interior walls, but is actually an exuberant outburst of flying concrete. There is no reminder here of the pipes and ducts and electrical conduits that make it work, unlike its counterpart of pleasure, the Centre Pompidou of Paris, which insists on exposing the guts of a modern building. Here space has dreamlike qualities making unexpected transitions from open to closed, from solid walls to membranes of glass, from roof to garden, in surprising and delightful juxtaposition.

Since the house is built into the side of a hill, the architects have cunningly used the terrain so that the ceiling on one floor suddenly erupts as the terrarium of another floor. Its indoor café, which also has a stage and dance floor, has the tiered arrangement of tables, draped in pale green and pink, that was de rigueur in American society movies of the thirties. At any moment, one expects Fred Astaire to tap his way down the stairs and onto the floor. This unique essay into modernity in a town otherwise given over to tradition is not without its critics. Ingeborg Hecht, the author of the most recent picture-book on Badenweiler, tactfully summarizes local opinion of the Kurhaus, and one can almost hear the uproar that it must have caused. "Since 1972," she writes, "it can no longer be wished away, although it caused considerable debate before it was completed, whether something so modern was indeed appropriate so near to the ruins of the noble castle."

However it is seen, the beating, living heart of this three-dimensional fantasy is the Kurhaus orchestra, which plays every day, three times a day, in the morning from eleven to twelve, in the afternoon from four to five-thirty, and in the evening from eight-fifteen until a quarter of ten. More than anything else, it is this orchestra that establishes the magical sense of being outside of time, which is the prevailing atmosphere of the place. The sun shines, the pennants flutter, the flowers put color into the landscape, and the orchestra plays the prize tunes of other centuries: Lortzing, Strauss, Dettlaff, Löhr, D'Orio and, on Sundays, overtures by Mozart, easy pieces by Schubert, and even a few melodic excerpts from Verdi. No braided or gilded uniforms for the musicians, not even a formal conductor; indeed on warm days they play in their shirt sleeves, and when the weather is more reasonable they wear a uniform of good, gray suits. Their first violinist, who also doubles as leader, is perhaps the one ornamental element in the ensemble and distinguishes himself not only by wearing a suit of contrasting color, but also by a Polish name and a magnificent, monarchical handlebar mustache. His popularity may be measured by the fact that the local photography store stocks glossy postcards showing him in evening dress and a cassette of his solos, culminating in the Gounod "Ave Maria." This piece is greeted, whenever he plays it, with hushed attention and rapturous applause.

I have sometimes speculated on this inexhaustible well of what the Germans call *Unterhaltungsmusik*, or music for entertainment. Is it really bottomless, or do they start the program over again on the first of every month? The twelve-piece orchestra that can, on occasion, produce a terrific storm of a Verdi overture, is in some ways the emblem of Badenweiler, the essence of much in little. The French-German writer, René Schickele, who was made an honorary citizen of Badenweiler, compared it to the inevitable Baden-Baden, describing it as a chamber troupe next to a great theater company, and as such it evokes a proprietary sense of intimacy.

But it is not only a matter of size. It is also one of tone, or to speak quite directly, of money. This is not a place frequented by the rich. This is the resort of the comfortable, unadventurous, unpretentious, solid middle class. Not chic, not trendy, not even very active. There is no golf course; there are a few tennis courts at inconvenient distances from

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town. But primarily what everyone is here for is the baths, the massages, the physiotherapy sessions, and absolute rest. Rest is, in fact, the major activity in Badenweiler. Even the local movie theater manages to stay open only four nights a week. There are no discos, and the three or four watering holes are essentially devoted to serious wine drinking, which is natural since this is an old, established wine-producing area. At one of the two fancy hotels in town, the management displays a card offering mixed drinks—a dazzling array of concoctions with international names based on gin, whiskey, or brandy. It is an option rarely taken. At the tables, one sees the *Römer* filled with the local wines. These traditional glasses, round bellied on fat green or yellow tapered stems, fulfill a legal requirement, for near the top they bear an incised line to which they are filled and a number that gives the quantity. And since the *Viertel*, or the quarter liter, predominates, it indicates something about the rate of consumption.

In the two grand hotels in town, the clientele do not seem visibly different in class from the strolling crowds on the street. But the buildings themselves have that look of controlled shabbiness and the indispensable nineteenth-century architecture that is the hallmark of European elegance. The grander of the two, the Hotel Römerbad, was established in 1822 and, despite renovation over the years, is still graced by that favorite style of hotel buildings and department stores at the turn of the century—a rotunda-like central court, in this case solidly roofed rather than glassed in, with each of the bedroom floors terminating in a balcony overlooking the main lobby. The Brown Palace Hotel in Denver is probably the best survival of the style in America, although it has recently been revived in more spectacular fashion by John Portman in his new Hyatt hotels in Atlanta, Chicago, and elsewhere. His are more spectacular only because he is dealing with higher spaces and has added flamboyant color, foliage, fountains, and visible elevators. Here, in a splendid restful logic, are groupings of club chairs and sofas that invite a leisurely afternoon coffee over a newspaper, a quiet confidential conversation, a reflective brandy after dinner. There is no falling water, no moving elevators, no noise; nothing moves, in fact, except for the occasional attentive waiter. And just beyond is the spacious dining room with a fleet of windows overlooking a park, paying tribute in its size and dignity to the importance that meals are given in a well-managed spa.

The other major hotel (The Park), which is less interesting architecturally, running more to neoclassic pillars, also has a spectacular dining room adrift in white napery and flanked by a wall of high windows ending in lunettes whose light is filtered by gauzy white curtains. Despite its modest public places, the Park Hotel cherishes, in the name of its Chekhov Bar, its one brush with immortality. In 1904, Anton Chekhov died there of tuberculosis in one of its second floor bedrooms.

But these grand hostelries are exceptions. Most of the accommodations are less given to fantasy and suit the temperament and expectations of the clientele, which run heavily toward *simplicissima*, which I transpose in modern terms to mean that they return regularly for the simple life. Even the older houses with historic names have been thoroughly rebuilt inside, and the emphasis is on excellent hardware, wonderful plumbing, freshly painted rooms, immaculate furnishings and linens, and on the outside an amazing profusion of brilliant flowers. There is no question in either the minds of the hotel keepers or their clientele that solidity, modernity, and convenience are, above all, what is wanted. Although to American eyes, Badenweiler seems almost picturesque—with its narrow winding streets, the ubiquitous flowers. The nineteenth-century fountains, even the remains of a former peasant courtyard (Bauernhof)—it is ultimately sensible, very comfortable, and very unfashionable.

In this imperturbability and obliviousness to change, the Badenweiler innkeepers seem to be upholding a centuries-old tradition. When a rather ambitious margrave in the eighteenth century decided to raise the level of accommodations in his village so as to attract the gentry to the baths, he got so little cooperation from the local establishments that he was forced to go into business himself and build a hotel suitable for the clientele he had in mind. Not half an hour away is the border to France, the home of revolution, in cooking as in politics. While the diet of the Western world is being transformed by the innovations of French chefs, in quiet Ba-

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denweiler they are still cooking out of the old cookbooks and following the old menus. The prices may vary from establishment to establishment, but the form of the meal, at least, is invariable. The Ratskeller restaurant, which opens for coffee at three in the afternoon, announces proudly that it offers cake as grandmother made it.

Although the restaurant menus have a familiarity and certainty that add little to the adventure of a vacation, the real excitement comes from the cafés, of which there are three in Badenweiler, and four counting the Kurhaus. In the interest of science, I studied the stock of these establishments assiduously for three weeks, and I did not once see a kiwi, that darling of nouvelle cuisine. There were plum and apple and peach and gooseberry and red currant tarts, decked out variously with meringue, custard or nut or crumb toppings, supported on puff paste or short crust or sponge-cake bases. There were cakes of infinite complexity of shape and content, iced and plain, tiny cookies that dissolved in the mouth, coffee cakes large and small filled with raisins or nuts or almond paste or poppy seeds, in twists or loaves or crescents. There were chocolate cakes, ranging from light to dark. There were fantasies based on cream fillings and cheesecakes made with real cheese. But never a kiwi. At the end I felt like applauding. Here was a convincing demonstration of the strength of tradition, and for anyone incautiously passing by in the early morning as the cakes came out of the oven, the fragrance alone was enough to induce insulin shock. It is no wonder then that at Badenweiler, as elsewhere in Germany, coffee and cake, as distinguished from dessert after lunch, are quite a separate event, taken ceremoniously around four o'clock, which is when the Kurhaus orchestra plays its second and principal performance of the day to the accompaniment of clattering cups and saucers and a subdued murmur of conversation.

The predominant color worn by both men and women visitors to the spa is beige, as if they had all taken a vow on arranging for their *Kur* not to distress one another with brilliant, eye-catching hues. One can see the reasoning: Let us be festive and summery and put away sensible, workaday dark clothes. But let us not be extravagant in brilliant white, which dirties easily, is absolutely seasonal, and cannot thriftily be carried over to the autumn. But a good pair of tan shoes will wear well into October without calling attention to itself. This caution, in fact, seems to be one of the main criteria of dress—a decent anonymity, respectability, a subdued hint of holiday, but very subdued. It is quite surprising here to see even a contemporary silhouette, let alone fashionable bagginess, crushed textures, or clashing patterns.

Vacations in America are synonymous with liberation, with a kind of anarchy and excess. The excesses may even be quite rigorous as in tennis camps or rafting trips or health farms, but they fulfill the need for exuberance and indulgence, an exceptional life, a complete break from regimen and routine, the ordinary.

Life at the spa seems to work in exactly the opposite direction—it is ordinary life and routine brought to the perfection that in daily life the pressure of business prevents. How else to explain the men in their perfectly pressed tan trousers, over the perfectly unblemished fawn-colored shoes, topped by the creaseless beige windbreaker. There are even those who choose to dress every morning in a starched shirt with a carefully knotted tie. It introduces, of course, a new idea of pleasure that collides head-on with the American idea of rumpled ease. The ladies are no less immaculate in their timeless print dresses, new shoes, and always and ever stockings. But being thus faultlessly costumed puts the players into perfect position for indulging in the other pleasures of the resort, once the serious business of massages, bathing, or exercising is out of the way. I would list these, in order, as: eating, urban strolling, attendance at the events at the Kurhaus, sight-seeing excursions elsewhere, or hiking trips, scientifically graded by duration and difficulty from one to four.

Since most of the visitors to Badenweiler stay at a hotel or pension, the ritual of mealtime becomes a serious part of the day's activities. To begin with, there is the table, which is always and everywhere decently clothed in one or sometimes two tablecloths. The good news sent out by the Bauhaus in the 1920s that the contemplation of exposed wood surfaces was a legitimate, even a pleasurable, possibility has not yet reached Badenweiler. Bureaus, commodes, chests of drawers, coffee tables, as well as dining tables, are all overlaid

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with lengths of cloth, more or less ornamented, embroidered, lace edged, appliquéd, pieced, etc.

Ways of covering dining tables fall into three categories. The outdoor wine or beer garden or café table is the simplest. Here a single tablecloth of decorous length, preferably fringed, will do. Since it is out of doors, which introduces the possibility of a sun umbrella, good strong colors are not unusual, although the Römerbad and Park Hotels have chosen pale green and pink, respectively, perhaps as a sign of gentility.

It is worth observing, parenthetically, that the German principle of table arrangement in cafés, even in big cities where land rents are high, is quite different from the French principle. In France, the chairs and tables are ranged in orderly, sometimes tiered rows so that people sit side by side and look out at the traffic on the street. German cafés arrange their chairs around the tables so that people look at one another. This has the subsidiary effect of leaving far more room between table and table and chair and chair than is so in France. In fact, the continuation of the linear principle in the popular banquette style of seating in French restaurants, which places total strangers cheek by jowl for a whole evening, would be totally unacceptable in Germany.

For ordinary dining, however, most restaurants, of whatever rank, resort to the double tablecloth approach. At the base there is a long, sometimes floor-length tablecloth. Over it is laid, quite thriftily, a smaller square, which is changed for every diner. Only at the Römerbad are the tables made up with single, long, white, heavily starched cloths which are extravagantly changed at every sitting.

I mentioned earlier that only every other person is at Badenweiler for the *Kur*, because nowhere is the "Noah's Ark Principle" (for this term I am indebted to Suzanna Barrows) in greater evidence than here, where people seem to move through the streets two by two and hand in hand. This is the haven for long-married couples, rarely under forty, generally over fifty. While romance in America seems to be the exclusive property of the young, here, in an atmosphere of intense propriety, there is hardly a pair who goes by that is not arm in arm, hand in hand, or with arms around one another's waist. In a memorable *New Yorker* short story, Charles McGrath writes of the bewilderment of a newly divorced man who sees his former wife strolling down the street with a new lover. The two of them, in matching tight jeans, are walking with their arms around each other's waist and their hands tucked into one another's back pockets. This erotic image destroys the poor old ex-husband who can hardly remember walking hand in hand with his wife. There is nothing very erotic about the hand-holding in Badenweiler, but it does convey durability, intimacy, trust. It is expressive without being demonstrative, and it also leaves no room at all for the *Kurschatten*. This portmanteau German word, "the shadow at the spa," describes the phenomenon that provided the substance for two centuries of novelists, especially Chekhov: the lover who melts away at the end of the *Kur*.

The *Kur* was, of course, once taken both more and less seriously than it is today. It was at once a resort where provincials went to get a taste of high life and company, a place to find husbands for daughters, or a place to which husbands would send ailing wives for several months in hopes of a recovery. Whatever the motive, it meant the population of the spas included an overwhelming number of single people of all ages who perambulated, who noticed one another, and who played merry games to while away the tedious weeks of attendance on the waters. While, as we know, romance may bloom at any age, it is not so much the advanced years of the spa-goers at Badenweiler as their firmly connubial condition that militates against the delicious idea of the *Kurschatten*, who seems to have passed away along with the belief in the curative powers of donkeys' milk.

This all-purpose remedy was required to be taken on an empty stomach. As the chroniclers tell us, the streets of nineteenth-century Badenweiler were enlivened early every morning by donkeys led by farm women who stationed themselves outside the best hotels waiting to milk their charges on demand. Donkeys' milk was recommended by the most famous of the early *Kur* doctors, Gustav Wever, because, he maintained, it was closest in its chemical composition to human milk. But he grew positively lyrical about the health-giving qualities of goats' milk, not distinguishing too clearly between the beauties

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of the pastures in which the goats fed and the benefits from their milk. In Badenweiler, according to Dr. Wever, cows' milk was to be used only for bathing.

Conversation was as much a part of the *Kur* as donkeys' milk, as the name of one of the *Kur* institutions testifies. Since one of the duties of the *Kur* visitor was to take the waters, in 1851 the Conversation House was built, in which people drank the famous lukewarm water tasting of magnesium (the *tepida* of Dr. Sulzer) and, between draughts, walked, talked, and socialized. People still take the waters, although on a less ceremonial and less sociable basis. There is a dispensing machine now outside the *Markgrafenbad*, the only blemish in the environs of this otherwise perfect nineteenth-century bathhouse. Here for two marks (a dollar) the visitor can buy a garish plastic folding cup and, thus equipped, visit the ever-flowing fountains. But the function of the Conversation Hall in its heyday and the daily concerts as the setting for chance encounters, meaningful glances, and social opportunity are things of the past. Noah's Ark has triumphed, and the unattached have found other ways and other places for attaching themselves. It is too bad that the erotic element is gone. The setting and pace are perfect for the establishment of a dreamlike liaison and for its slow dissolution. Perhaps some breath of that past still lingers and animates the clasped hands of long-married couples.

However pleasant a visit to Germany may be, there are few tourists who can leave without thinking about the past. The very virtues that make life for the American visitor so delightful are fraught with social and political resonances. For the foreigner these qualities provoke uneasy, if simpleminded, questions about national character and its relation to the Nazi past; and for Germans it is an inescapable part of their consciousness. After the devastating war, it was these very characteristics—industry, cleanliness, order, the rational organization of life, and social responsibility—that produced the prosperous agricultural landscapes and the glittering cities that one sees in Germany today. By the sixties, the well-kept houses and public buildings, the immaculate streets, the attractive stores, and the high quality of food and consumer goods aroused not gratitude among the young but rebellion, and were among the principal targets of the student outbursts of that period. The revolt of the sixties brought buried problems into the open and produced some moderate reforms in the universities, but the underlying question that torments Germany—the responsibility for Hitler—has still not been answered.

In the summer of 1985, the International Psychoanalytic Association held its first meeting in Germany since the Hitler period, a decision that had stimulated considerable internal controversy. The edgy participants were greeted at their opening meeting by Klaus von Dohnanyi, the mayor of Hamburg. Dohnanyi, who has an American law degree and comes from a family that counts among its members prominent victims of the Hitler regime, met the issue directly by stating what was on everyone's mind and from which it was hard to move on.

With a remorseless logic, he argued that "whoever says, 'our Bach and our Beethoven,' must also say, 'our Hitler.' " There have been and are Fascist regimes in other countries, he continued, but the Holocaust happened only in Germany and therefore must have something to do with Germany. But pointing to the authoritarian character of the Germans is "not enough to comprehend even the periphery of Auschwitz. I know of no answer," he went on, somewhat despairingly, "to the question of the cause, the German cause" of it all. His and our inability to find answers or assign blame keeps the wounds open.

It is hard not to remember that the efficiency and orderliness that produce such a model society today were harnessed once for the operation of Hitler's killing machine. And the attempt to make a bridge between that grisly past and the appealing Germany of today is what reduces the visitor to a state of silent perplexity.

Young Germans who have inherited the stigma and guilt have needed to wrestle with this more thoroughly and steadily than the casual visitor, and there have been varying expressions of that struggle. The doubt and discomfort and self-criticism form a steady stream of reflection that is only occasionally visible to foreigners, but it is a consciousness that Germans live with and demonstrate on many levels. There is, for example, the young

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publisher who beats a hasty retreat from a folksy restaurant with the comment, "That's too German for me." The peasant-style decorations and the dirndl-clad waitresses cannot help but trigger for him memories of the Nazi exaltation of the *Volk* with all its consequences. Or more directly, Heinrich Böll who remarked to his Israeli escort upon leaving the Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Holocaust in Jerusalem, "The Germans make me anxious to this very day with their thoroughness and orderliness. I am anxious about our success, and about the size of our economic and military power."

The effect of these anxieties is to throw suspicion on all those excellent qualities that are the foundation of a productive society. In Germany they can no longer be thought of by themselves; frequently, they are perceived as having made the Germans the compliant servants of a dread cause. And insofar as these characteristics contributed to that uniquely German phenomenon, the death camps, there is always that little shiver of discomfort when we begin to enjoy the benefits of that "thoroughness and orderliness."

"And yet," we say very reasonably and reprovingly to ourselves, "that is to mistake the symptom for the disease." But the unreasoning part expressed by Böll—or by the publisher whose political self begins to send out warning signals when confronted with Bavarian kitsch, or by the students who saw the increasingly ordered and prosperous life of the sixties as a great mask that covered complicity, denial, retreat from responsibility—will not be silent.

We are twenty years away now from the revolt of the sixties, and the Great Silence of the post-war years has been broken. Even in remote Badenweiler, in the summer of 1985, the guide to the ruined medieval castle hastens to assure visitors that the notorious Badenweiler march, Hitler's favorite, is not associated with this Badenweiler but with another in Lorraine. In fact, he adds, that march is no longer permitted to be played in this Badenweiler. The missing Jewish presence is noted with an exhibition of the work of the Jewish book illustrator, E. M. Lilien, a Galician Jew, who worked in Germany during the first two decades of this century.

While Badenweiler has few famous native sons, its history is studded with the names of notable visitors who, in search of health, have died there, as did Stephen Crane in 1920 and also Lilien in 1925. The exhibition, displayed on the second floor of the former ducal palace, featured his drawings of East European Jewish life, sketches of Jerusalem and his illustrations for an edition of Luther's Bible. The principal bookstore in town (one of two) devoted a week to the display of Lilien's books and posters, including rare first editions from the 1920s. The charming Sybille, an assistant in the store, a few years out of high school, emptied the window for me, when I inquired about the Lilien books. Although they were not for sale, she cleared a table and found a chair so that I could look at them in comfort. Was this ordinary friendliness toward strangers or a heightened sensitivity about Jewish matters? If the latter, what can it all mean to her, a girl barely turned twenty? Was it an accident that the same window was used the next week for a display of Heine? These are the questions that nag and unfairly cast their shadow over this innocent, lighthearted, and obliging girl.

While this is not meant to be an essay on German politics or collective guilt or the Jewish question, it is very hard to be in Germany, even for a brief period of time, and not run into fragments of this unceasing part of the national memory. In pastoral Badenweiler one sees an essentially undisturbed remnant of the industrious, respectable middle class enjoying an undisturbed fragment of German life. In any big city of Western Europe today, one would be hard put to identify nationality with any certainty. International styles of dress, the ubiquitous McDonald's, the potpourri of automobiles on the streets—Japanese, French, German, Swedish—seem to leave only marginal things like language and currency as the clue to absolute identification. Badenweiler is an enclave that offers an immoderate measure of certainty. The cars that line the streets run heavily to Mercedes; the leather goods, like the Mercedes door, close with a convincing thud; and the tourist kitsch is unmistakably from the Schwarzwald and not produced in Hong Kong. The regulated pace, the rhythm of the day and the week, is not something idiosyncratically imposed by the spa doctors. This is part of the built-in time clock of its visitors, who are, with only rare exceptions, German. Released from the

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pressure of the working world, this is how the visitors to Badenweiler choose to live. It has its merits.

One regrets sometimes that orderliness and cleanliness have fallen into such bad repute. According to the popular reading of the Freudian dispensation, they are the outward, visible signs of neurotic disturbances, and one of the hallmarks of twentieth-century behavior is probably the elaborate stratagems that we employ to camouflage any tendency towards neatness. The fear of freely used Freudian epithets has sent generations of tidy housekeepers and other methodical souls into hiding. Conventional wisdom speaks through the mass-produced placards for sale in stationery stores. One reads: "A clean desk is a sign of a dirty mind." And there is no mistaking the judgment in: "Dull women have immaculate homes." A little picturesque negligence, an airy insouciance about work, a reputation for catching trains and planes as the doors are about to close, is the style that is wanted. But there can be no doubt that there is also a generation of closet cleanliness freaks. In Badenweiler they have come out of the closet.

In its origin, the perfectly orderly life of early times was part of the tyranny of life with servants. The household was as much a workplace as any factory or business, and as such required a regular schedule of duties divided among its workers. Having hired a staff, however small, and set a schedule—breakfast at eight, lunch at one, laundry on Mondays—the employers no less than the servants were subject to the exigencies of their own decisions. Later, even in the servantless household, the schedule gave shape and also a dignity to the homely business of eating, changing clothes, making beds. I think that one can argue that the organized meal stands higher in the scale of human socialization than "grazing," a recent coinage used to describe a way of taking nourishment in the form of snacks rather than in set meals in the course of the day. The interposition of ceremony between the wish and the act does, after all, seem to be what civilization is all about.

What is missing in the Badenweiler landscape is the exuberance and expressiveness that add so much color to the American resort picture. The kooky dress, the hedonistic atmosphere, the high colors are all in a different key from Badenweiler. In America, pleasure is louder, more open, on display. Pleasure in Badenweiler is on a different scale, like the cultivated European landscape that seems almost toy-like to the American eye. It takes some looking to perceive it.

Hedonism is there, too, but as Dr. Sulzer said of the water, it is *tenuissima*, undiluted, authentic, and carried off with a light hand. Badenweiler is a tiny ordered universe where each guest stands at the center of his own tiny, ordered world. He has his schedule of physiotherapy, massages, and baths. He is under the regular supervision of a doctor who follows his progress, inquires after his appetite, and urges rest. Even traffic is brought to a halt between midnight and six in the morning and again during the siesta hours to minimize external disturbance.

Badenweiler reminds one of the totally enclosed, totally self-absorbed world of the great old transatlantic liners where the principal talent that was called for was acceptance of the arcane program slipped under the stateroom door at dawn and meant to fill the whole day. Similarly in Badenweiler, what is required is a willingness to go along with the Saturday tea dances, the odd concert or traveling theatrical company, the measured walks, a willingness, in short, to take the universe of Badenweiler as the given. And within that universe, each visitor can work out, for the time being, at least, his complete salvation. It is only a hint, a foretaste perhaps, of something not manageable in the intractable real world. But what is heaven if not possibility brought to perfection?

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PORTRAIT

Francis Fergusson, 1904–1986

JOHN McCORMICK

After his death in December 1986, Francis Fergusson was identified in certain obituaries merely as a professor and literary critic, which is like identifying Thomas Jefferson merely as a gentleman farmer. Fergusson's reticence and unwillingness to thrust himself forward concealed versatility and mastery in several forms. By turns he was student of biology, of philosophy, writer, *régisseur*, occasional actor, director, playwright, poet, critic, university professor (who elected to work in comparative literature), husband, father, and stout friend. He had the good luck to belong to his time and to his country, and to find his time and his country worth belonging to. He was the most American literary figure I have ever known, even though his skepticism and philosophical naturalism prevented him from flag-waving or spiritual cheerleading. Once after I returned from a year in Europe, I complained to him that our president was illiterate, the Congress a disgrace, and the voters insane. Francis simply replied, "I rather like all that."

Fergusson's birth and early upbringing shaped his character and the turns of his life to an extraordinary degree. His father, Harvey B. Fergusson, was born in Alabama in 1848; he studied at Washington and Lee University, taught Greek and modern languages there, then became a lawyer. After practicing law in Wheeling, West Virginia, Francis's father went out to Albuquerque, then in the territory of New Mexico, where he staked out a claim to a silver mine. In 1887 he married Clara Hüning (1865–1950), who had been born in Albuquerque but educated partially in Germany before returning to New Mexico. Harvey Fergusson was a delegate to the fifty-fifth Congress in 1897–99, a member of the Democratic National Committee during the Bryan campaign, and a member of Congress from 1911 to 1915 (New Mexico having entered the Union in 1912).

On June 9, 1915, Harvey Fergusson was found hanging from the cottonwood tree in the courtyard of his Spanish-style residence in Albuquerque. Family accounts vary, but either the eleven-year-old Francis found the body or his mother did. Francis told his son, also named Harvey, that when his father's body was laid out for viewing, as was the custom, his throat had been cut from ear to ear. His father had failed to be re-elected to Congress and had been acting unusually, Francis said, just before his death.

One result of that dreadful event was that for a long time Francis lost all appetite, and he subsisted for four years on the edge of starvation. At age fifteen he forced himself to eat a balanced diet, but the long deficiency left him with a slight spinal hump at shoulder level. A less obvious result of his father's death, I suspect, was his laconic cast, his reserve, together with his generosity and thoughtfulness to his own family and to friends. At a further remove, the theatricality of his father's death might seem to suggest his taste for the theater, if not for his ensuing distinction in that activity.

When I first met Francis and his wife, Marion Crowne Fergusson, in the spring of 1957, I knew of him only as the author of *The Idea of a Theater* (1949). After teaching abroad for several years, I needed a year at home and arranged for a stint at Bennington College as a visiting lecturer. We met in the house of the late Paul Feeley, a prominent

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painter of the New York School, an ex-Marine sergeant, marathon poker player, and fly fisherman. As his fine poem dedicated to Paul Feeley, "The Big Branch: A Memorandum," testifies, Francis, too, fished trout. Having left Bennington in 1947, Francis would return each spring to fish the Big Branch. At our first meeting, Francis volunteered little, but he projected an authoritative if reticent presence. There was none of the customary "Where are you from?" talk that got on my English wife's nerves. (Nor from Stanley Edgar Hyman, also at Bennington, whose very first words to us were, "Finally my belly is bigger than my behind, so now my pants stay up." "How fascinating," my wife said.)

Upon leaving, you might not remember precisely what Francis had said, but you could not forget his pleasant, accentless voice, his full crop of gray hair, or his haunted expression. He resembled a tall William Faulkner. After we became colleagues at Rutgers in 1959, I read and reread his writing, and over many a workday lunch or more leisurely pre-dinner bourbon, as he described episodes of his experience, I discovered aspects of his temperament that he kept from public view, and I learned to remember his words.

Francis's American quality derived in part from his roots in New Mexico, where as a small boy he learned Spanish and observed the ways of the Hopi Indians. It derived also from his early schooling in New Mexico, in Washington, D.C., when his father was in Congress, in New York City, at Harvard, and at Queen's College, Oxford. It derived, I believe, from his travels and periods of residence abroad, characteristic of his generation of artists. Some two or three years after her husband's death, Clara Fergusson moved with Francis to Manhattan, leaving her two daughters and her older son, all of whom were many years older than Francis, to their careers in the West. In New York, Clara Fergusson made "pathetic" (Francis's word) attempts to increase her small income by decorating chinaware.

Francis commuted by subway to the Bronx High School of Science, then for his final preparatory year, 1920–21, he attended the Ethical Culture School in Manhattan (now called Fieldston). There he formed lifelong friendships with the writer Jeannette Mirsky and with Robert Oppenheimer, his exact contemporary, born in 1904. Francis flourished under the tutelage of Herbert Winslow Smith, with whom both he and Oppenheimer continued to correspond long after their graduation. Fergusson and Oppenheimer planned to enroll at Harvard together in 1921, but illness delayed Oppenheimer for one year, while Francis went up to Cambridge alone, after a summer in New Mexico with Paul Horgan, the writer, who had been a boyhood companion in Albuquerque.

At Harvard, although Fergusson concentrated his studies in biology, partly because of Oppenheimer's influence, he was already reading Dante, writing verse and a novel (which has not survived), and reading philosophy with Raphael Demos. He visited Oppenheimer's parents' home on Riverside Drive during the holidays and returned to New Mexico for the summers. Harvard awarded him a partial scholarship, which he referred to in a letter to Paul Horgan as his "scholarship trap," adding, "Have you read Clive Bell's *Art*? If not do so at once, and let me know what you think of it." At the end of his sophomore year, 1923, Fergusson won a Rhodes Scholarship to Queen's College. His very young man's iconoclasm dominates a letter to Horgan of September 2, 1923, written aboard the Cunarder RMS *Albania*:

> After this journey I shall never be able to have the word *Rhodes Scholar* mentioned in my presence. Eleven days cramped intimately with the greatest philosophers on earth would kill me, but with these morons! Really, they're as easy to find anything in common with as so many dolphins. The Southern delegates spend the whole time at poker, in a haze of cigar smoke. . . . There is the aesthete from whom I derive a little comfort, though he is pretty busy with "Histoire de l'art." Three men asserted that they wished to write. Two of them, on investigation, proved pretty low. I am avoiding a third in order to maintain, if possible, the illusion.

His first year at Oxford was difficult. Oppenheimer reported that Francis complained of loneliness. During that year he gave up biology, after working with the great Sherrington, believing that he would never have the requisite mathematics. Francis changed to

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Modern Greats (politics, philosophy, economics) and came to better terms with existence at Oxford. Summer 1924 found him in France, taking part in "Entretiens de Pontigny." Pontigny was a former Cistercian abbey where each summer in three-week sessions wide-ranging discussions took place among such men as Mauriac, du Gard, Malraux, Maurois, Madaule, Gide, Valéry, Schlumberger, Aron, Ramon Fernandez, Lalou, Curtius, and even Lytton Strachey. Fergusson seems to have returned to Pontigny in 1925, too. I think that Pontigny provided him the model for the Princeton seminars in literary criticism, of which he became the first director (1949).

At some point along the Oxford way, Fergusson joined the undergraduate Poetry Society and, in other ways, broke through his sense of isolation. Of his later career at Queen's, Oppenheimer wrote to Herbert Smith, "He knows everyone at Oxford; he goes to tea with Lady Ottoline Morrell, the high priestess of civilized society, & the patroness of Eliot and Berty [Bertrand Russell]. . . ." At Lady Ottoline's, Oppenheimer added, Francis "learned how to treat dukes." In later years, Henry Bamford Parkes said that Francis had changed entirely after Oxford.

Fergusson and Oppenheimer were reunited in England after a two-year separation. "We walked along the cliffs and talked, of course, about everything under the sun, and that was very pleasant. I always enjoyed that sort of thing," Francis wrote to Paul Horgan. And on a hot afternoon in the summer of 1925, Francis told me, he was in Heidelberg, lying on his bed in a hotel room, reading Kant, when his strong-willed mother appeared unannounced and commanded him to travel with her about the Continent.

Oppenheimer was working at Cambridge University in Francis's final year at Oxford. During the Christmas holidays of 1925–26, the two were together in Paris. It is no secret that for all his exceptional brilliance, Oppenheimer was given to alarming psychotic episodes. In the course of one of their discussions in Paris, Oppenheimer came up on Francis from behind and, in earnest or in jest, tried to throttle him. After a tussle, Francis emerged unscathed but concerned. Oppenheimer apologized humbly by letter upon his return to Cambridge, and Francis did his best to stand by his friend in later episodes of depression and despair that not even a Harley Street psychiatrist could counter.

Having taken a second-class honors degree at Oxford, Fergusson returned to the U.S. in the mid or late summer of 1926. The question of a career had been decided for him by his attendance at a performance by the Old Vic company in 1926. From that point on, Francis told his son, Harvey, he knew that he wanted to spend his life in the theater. He soon settled into a studio apartment on East 58th Street in Manhattan and began four years of work in the American Laboratory Theatre, a stint that taught him the craft and art of the Moscow Art Theatre and introduced him to Marion Crowne, whom he married in 1931. As directors of the Laboratory Theatre, Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya had brought to New York the techniques of their master, Stanislavsky. His approach to theater is famous for incorporating not only age-old techniques of acting and staging, but also full intellectual and physical involvement on the part of an integrated repertory company, to produce a reasoned mix of classical and modern work. Stanislavsky is popularly but incorrectly seen as the progenitor of method acting. Lee Strasberg, Francis noted, was only incidentally and occasionally present at the American Laboratory productions. He adapted certain of Boleslavsky's techniques, but he added a broad rasher of psychological motivation that was not present in the founder's mind or practice. The Laboratory Theatre was thus in the vanguard, but it was spared from much of the silliness of the avant-garde movements of the period between the wars.

As *régisseur* to Boleslavsky, Fergusson was plunged at once into the leading and most enduring tradition of the modern theater movement in Europe and the United States and was forced to learn every large and small aspect of theatrical production. As early as December 20, 1927, Francis had found his first and enduring principle, fidelity to the text. He wrote to Paul Horgan:

> I have been fighting Herr Director and working day and night to prove my point, which was that Much Ado should be left in the Shakespeare scene order. The final result is that I have just put it on in that form, after he put it on in a revised form devised by

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himself, which made it incomprehensible. Everybody likes my and Shakespeare's version better, so I now feel well intrenched [*sic*]. . . . You know enough about the theater to realize what chaos, what diplomacy, what 24 hour a day labors all this means.

But not all was theater. The letter concludes, "Robert O comes down from time to time—I'm seeing him tonight at dinner. He's always stimulating and full of new books and good poetry. . . . I'm sending you the Divina Commoedia with English on one page and Italian on the other. Perhaps you will have time to dabble in it and find some nice bits for us to enjoy together when we meet next summer, as we must do. I have the same edition."

The apprentice years matter considerably in Francis Fergusson's career, for while much of his later life was given over to teaching and writing, he remained primarily an artist in his approach to all his mature activity. His range, from the Greeks to Pirandello to *The Great Gatsby* and beyond, was the range of an accomplished actor, but one whose work on the moderns reflected tradition, the terms and disciplines of the past. In reading Francis's work, one is always conscious that he had a base in biology, just as Aristotle was a biologist, as Fergusson noted in his essay on the *Poetics*.

The Laboratory Theatre could not withstand the stock market debacle of 1929, and early in 1930 it, too, failed. Fergusson now scratched a living as drama critic for the *Bookman* from 1930 to 1932. He was an editor and frequent contributor to the *Hound and Horn* from 1930 until its death in 1934; he followed his friend Richard Blackmur as its editor and wrote some of his best early essays for the magazine. From 1932 to 1934 Francis lectured on drama and literature at the New School for Social Research and served as executive secretary as well. It must have been in those difficult Depression years that Francis picked up his expression of comic distress, a Yiddish "oi yoi." Slightly less comic distress brought forth a Spanish "Aiee," or a simple German "Himmel." Genuine distress produced only stoical silence. I never heard him curse and thought him incapable of that recourse, but his daughter assured me that when he had made a wrong turn off a highway he had indeed cursed.

Francis wrote that Molière acquired "his extraordinary mastery of the stage itself, in the only way, the hard way." Francis wrote with authority, for his own knowledge was acquired exactly like that. He and Marion spent thirteen years, from 1934 to 1947, as members of the early faculty at Bennington College, where he lectured on theater and literature and directed the college theater, while his wife taught acting. The Fergussons were content at Bennington; what the college could not give in respectable salaries it made up for in freedom to its faculty to work out their destinies without traditional academic impediments. Now Francis was able to integrate his various approaches of the past into a theory of what theater should be, of what is or is not possible on stage, and how best to explain to himself, to his students, and to the world a theory of art adapted centrally from Aristotle's *Poetics*, from his work with Boleslavsky, and as theater director at Bennington.

In 1972, Francis said to an interviewer that at Bennington he continued to use the methods of the Laboratory Theatre "not only in directing plays, but in the analysis of the poetry, fiction and drama which I continued to teach in the literature division. I still use [them], whenever I work on literature; I think the Moscow Art Theatre's notion of 'action' is essentially the same as Aristotle's, and that Aristotle's theory of drama and other arts as 'the imitation of an action' is much the best we have." Throughout his career, he continued to think about, to apply, and to enlarge, I believe, the Aristotelian term from the *Poetics*, a term in that text at once seductive and fraught with ambiguity. Early on, Francis allied the idea of action to a view very like T. S. Eliot's notion of the necessity of an integral community for the production of great drama.

In the introduction to *The Idea of a Theater*, Francis compared the Elizabethan theater, "which had been formed at the center of the culture of its time," with the modern period, in which "human nature seems to us a hopelessly elusive and uncandid entity," creating virtually impossible conditions for the contemporary playwright. Aristotelian action, therefore, became equally elusive. In an early essay, "Exiles and Ibsen's Work" (1932), Francis found in Ibsen the purest modern equivalent of Aristotelian action, unlike what

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occurs in James Joyce's *Exiles*. Ibsen's characters are still representative, they still reflect a unifying thesis deriving from ethical impulse, while Joyce "substitutes for action a motionless picture, and for a thesis a metaphysical vision of a kind of godless monadology or Pluralistic Universe, of a consistency and strictness which William James the liberal never dreamed of." And, in another context, Fergusson compared Henry James and Chekhov, discovering the use of social ceremony in Chekhov akin to that of Henry James, their purpose identical: "to focus attention on an action which all share by analogy, instead of upon the reasoned purpose of any individual, as Ibsen does in his drama of ethical motivation."

The contemporary theater in New York had sold out, Fergusson believed; he wrote that "each poetic dramatist platonically discerns his own beautiful, consistent and intelligible dramatic idea while the formless population, looking the other way, is engrossed in the commercially profitable shadows on the cave-wall." Fergusson's own power as playwright is evident in *Penelope*, a rendering of Odysseus's return to Ithaca. His opinion of the New York theater was not enhanced by the commercial failure of his musical verse-play, *The King and the Duke* (after the episode in *Huckleberry Finn* and written in the mid or late thirties), produced at the Circle-in-the-Square in 1953. By 1957 he could be impolite, for him, about it all, referring (in the introduction to *The Human Image in Dramatic Literature*, 1957) to "the schizophrenic Eden of the middle-brows, where everyone is nice *and* rich. . . ."

Thus the artist in Francis Fergusson continued to predominate over the lecturer. The second of his formative ideas that is allied to the idea of action is his use of the term "tragic rhythm." Always generous in acknowledging his sources, he noted that Scott Buchanan had found tragic rhythm to have been taken over by natural science, a statement of Francis's own naturalism, as I read it, and a source of his cheerful pessimism. By moving from biology to theater, Francis had tried in one sense to deny the truth he recognized in the insight of the mathematician Buchanan concerning modern society. The entire attempt suggests the unity of Francis's career, in which a tragic rhythm informs his life and thought. His students were often startled when their instructor asked them to apply to *The Divine Comedy* (or to modern fiction, lyric poetry, or drama) the ancient idea of action, but they soon came to find the procedure more than a pedagogical device when allied, as it always was, to his insistence on fidelity to text and to close reading of text.

Fergusson left Bennington at the end of 1947 to spend two years at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, at the invitation of Robert Oppenheimer, its new director. There Francis wrote *The Idea of a Theater*. From 1949 to 1952, he was the first director of the Princeton Seminars in Criticism (renamed the Christian Gauss Seminars in Literary Criticism in 1952), and he also taught in the English division of the modern language department. In 1952–53 he was visiting professor of English at Indiana University, and in 1953 he was named University Professor at Rutgers, where he remained until his retirement in 1969. Despite Francis's years in the theater, he never confused teaching with entertainment. He never shouted, he was not didactic, yet he held strong opinions. He listened to students, as he did to friends, and he thought before answering a question. The resulting silences were not empty or embarrassing, but fruitful. They set an intellectual pace.

During his Princeton period, Francis received a red-eyed and apparently weeping student in his office for a scheduled morning conference. Observing the man's condition, he chose not to pry into the cause of the man's distress but to telephone a dean whose job it was to cope with crisis. The student then explained that he had come to his appointment after his required morning laps as a member of the swimming team in water too heavily chlorinated. Here we may see a characteristic Franciscan response: his unwillingness to intrude upon the student's "grief" was greater than his wish to assist.

The course of Francis's life in American universities was not entirely smooth. Lacking the Ph.D. or even the American M.A., he was regarded in some quarters as unqualified to breathe the Castalian air of the tenured professoriat. Although his university professorship meant that he outranked mere full pro-

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fessors, traditional departments at Rutgers refused him hospitality, until the German department offered an office that he called, with accuracy, a broom closet. When I arrived at Rutgers in 1959, it was in his broom closet, wryly amused, that I found him, but by 1961 he was my senior and honored colleague in the newly founded graduate department of Comparative Literature, where he occupied a proper office in departmental headquarters. His influence on all of us, faculty and students alike, was subtle and pervasive. His standards, we hoped, became ours, and his bearing affected even the most unkempt bumpkin among his students. He never put on side or pulled rank. He was generous with his time for students, even in periods of leave, taking time, as the novelist and critic Alan Cheuse put it, "to read my awful undergraduate stories, telling me that my language showed 'promise.' " And the poet Robert Pinsky said that, as he was lecturing at Berkeley recently, he heard "Francis *speaking through* him." All the while, Francis indicated doubt about the Ph.D. mills in which he was a miller, a doubt that made for health and candor in our offerings, I like to believe.

That splendid Italian writer Natalia Ginzburg said once, "I write above all, I think, to be understood. That is the driving impulse behind what I do. . . . Each word, when I write, each sentence, is chosen extremely carefully to be as simple, as direct as possible. Every sentence must say something and get it across. Every sentence. That is important to me." I am certain that Francis would have agreed with every word, for his prose exemplifies that ideal to the letter. To the Barthes, Foucault, Derrida *école* in this country, who proclaim themselves specialists in theory, Fergusson's work looks old-fashioned; his belief in the existence and necessity of tradition is indeed old-fashioned. But, as the best writing always does, his stands outside and beyond fashion. Historical knowledge married to an artist's sensibility resulted in enduring work. Unlike Richard Blackmur, whose temperament was similar to Fergusson's, Fergusson wrote prose that is limpid and quotable, whereas Blackmur's prose is intentionally obscure and thick with qualification. In an early essay on Joyce, Fergusson wrote, "Nowhere outside *Exiles* will you find human isolation so finely rendered—that obstinate incommensurability of human longings which seems to be the cold little wisdom of our time. . . ." Some thirty-four years later he wrote about criticism that "the critic must learn to spend his little energies where they will do the most good, distinguishing what is essential in literature from what is accidental, peripheral, trivial, or merely temporary." In two words he compressed familiarity and judgment by describing as "complacent provinciality" Voltaire's preference for his version of Oedipus over that of Sophocles. In another vein, Fergusson found Molière's comedy akin "to the modest sweetness of seventeenth-century music."

Fergusson's style is prominently American. It is the American plain style, free of what Allen Tate called "scholarly rubbish." The diction surprises when he used slang and colloquialisms: Molière's theater, he wrote, "has that alert and worldly pep which is properly called the *esprit gaulois*." "Pep," a favorite word of George Babbitt, is thus resuscitated and given pleasing currency. And an American barb lodges in Fergusson's description of Kenneth Burke's style as a "perpetual-motion machine, or jungle gym for exercising and deflating the literary mind."

In 1954, Francis bought a modest frame house and five acres of land on a quiet road on the outskirts of Kingston, New Jersey, and three miles from Princeton. His acreage sloped from the road down to a swamp, and the land had turned into jungle. Patiently he cleared the undergrowth, selectively cut down trees, and over the years created a handsome landscaped garden. There he continued to write until Parkinson's disease prevented him from doing so. Drama continued to preoccupy him. He saw Dante's epic as drama, and through his theories of action and tragic rhythm, he found ways of comparing Dante and Shakespeare. Ibsen and Pirandello regularly appeared on his course lists, while he ranged up and down European and American literature in his memorable course for undergraduates, Sources of Modern Literature. His writing during these years was not voluminous, but it was steady and pungently valuable. *Dante's Drama of the Mind* appeared in 1953, followed by *The Human Image in Dramatic Literature: Essays* in 1957;

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Poems 1929–1961 in 1962; *Dante*, 1966; *Shakespeare, The Pattern in His Carpet*, 1970; *Literary Landmarks*, 1975; and *Trope and Allegory*, 1977. His honors accrued as he aged, and with these honors came invitations and extensive travels: to Japan, to Somalia for a visit to his son in the consulate at Mogadishu, to Italy, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, to Spain.

Marion Fergusson died of cancer in 1959. Three years later, following a period of bleak solitude, Francis married Peggy Kaiser, a widowed Englishwoman and friend from his Bennington days. A gifted painter and a gardener, Peggy devoted herself to Francis and made their house and garden a delight to visit in all seasons. Francis was never more content than when sitting in his garden in summer, or at his kitchen window in winter at dusk, to see deer browsing on the land, or rabbits, and, more than once, a vixen and her cubs at play.

After Francis's retirement, his friends, particularly Joseph Frank and I, urged him to write his autobiography, or at least an extended memoir about his early days in New Mexico. He liked to remember an idyllic trip by raft on the Rio Grande with his elder brother, Harvey, and their adventure of concealing themselves to watch a secret Hopi Indian ritual. I well knew that Francis was too self-effacing to write about himself. He proposed instead to write about his friends, a project that involved long research and hundreds of pages of notes about Robert Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer's misadventures in Washington elicited Francis's loyalty and the resolution to put right what he believed to be others' inadequate efforts to present his friend to a wide public. At the same time, he saw a good deal of other eminent friends, not because they were eminent, but because they were friends: Richard Blackmur, Roger Sessions, Allen Tate. Francis and Peggy were visiting the Oppenheimers by chance on the night of Robert's death in February 1967.

Francis's work on the projected portrait of Oppenheimer came to an end, gradually but inevitably, as Parkinson's disease invaded his body. Never a man to complain, he seemed to become serene and even cheerful as the disease became crippling. His legs failed him, but even when it was agony for a visitor to see him walk, he would insist on pulling up a chair for a woman and would himself prepare the visitor's drink. During his final five years, he not only became immobile, but his ability to swallow was diminished and he could speak only slowly and with difficulty. Yet on one occasion when my wife briefly relieved Peggy from her nursing cares, Francis failed to begin his lunch, and when questioned, replied, "I was waiting for you to begin." In dreadful periods in the hospital, when he was frail and gaunt, he became a favorite of the nurses, always finding strength to ask how *they* were feeling.

Years before, when I had read his book on Dante, I asked Francis whether he had been exposed to any sort of religious training, because I found his grasp of Dante's theology to be that not only of a scholar, but of a scholar-believer. "Oh, no," he answered. "I've always been an atheist." He added that his father before him had been an atheist, as was his mother and her father. That conversation came to mind when Peggy told me that during his final stay in hospital, a clergyman turned up in his room, asking, "Have you thought about God?" Francis, who had not spoken for hours or even days, replied nevertheless, "I don't believe in God." "But God believes in you," the clergyman insisted, at which Francis rolled his eyes upward in Peggy's direction, and the clergyman, blessedly, departed.

I also remember Francis in the hospital, sitting in a wheelchair and looking out on the public street, believing that he was in his kitchen, seeing the deer. With that memory came to mind the beautiful short story of J. F. Powers, "Lions, Harts, Leaping Does," which I had read when it first appeared in 1951. It concerns an aged Franciscan priest, Father Didymus, who in winter, like Francis Fergusson at this time, is near death. A lay brother, Titus, is devoted to him, and to pass the time reads to him from the lives of the saints, particularly those who had been accused of heresy, Didymus's favorites. As death approaches, he asks Titus to read "Lions, Harts, Leaping Does," a title that he has invented, just as Francis invented the deer in Witherspoon Street, Princeton.

At Francis's death in the week before Christmas, I remembered his lovely poem, "A Suite for Winter," in which he seemed to have

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anticipated, and, by anticipating, to have transcended, his own death. The final stanza reads:

When the year moves toward cold and dark, the city
  denies with its myriad glitter of light
  the primitive chill of terror and pity

Which is the signal of the coming night
  of winter. Curled within its cozy fringe
  of fur, the mindless creature can sleep tight;

But the waking spirit feels the cold impinge
  upon the hidden quick of its desire,
  night edge its little vision with the tinge

Of boundless dark. What then would it require
  to make those gentle faces disappear,
  sparks in the black abyss like this brief fire,
  Christmas lights that come with the cold of the
    year?

Many may hear Francis Fergusson speaking through them, but he was a man who can have neither sequel nor analogue.

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REAPPRAISAL

Hoosier Humorist, Three Letters

ALBERT ASHFORTH

One day in September 1897, a tall man with sharply chiseled features, who was on the threshold of fame and fortune but didn't know it, sat down at his desk in the city room of the *Chicago Record*. After pondering how he might fill his daily column, an idea for something new began to take form in his mind. As George Ade later recalled that day: "I sat at the desk and gazed at the empty soft paper, and realized the necessity of concocting something different. . . . Why not a fable for a change? And instead of slavishly copying Aesop and La Fontaine, why not retain the archaic form and the stilted manner of composition, and for purposes of novelty, permit the language to be 'fly,' modern, and undignified, quite up to the moment?"

Even years later, Ade was able to recall the circumstances surrounding his contribution to the *Record* for September 17, 1897. Called simply "This Is a Fable," it was an uncomplicated little vignette about two sisters—one industrious and plain, the other frivolous and beautiful. Capital letters were sprinkled throughout the story arbitrarily, and many of the words were hyphenated. But what really set the contribution apart was the arch, rakish language in which it was written—a vernacular then common in the Middle West—and the ingenious manner in which the commonplace moral ("Never despise the poor") was employed to make an ironic and irreverent point.

None of the readers who chuckled at the story over their eggs and coffee knew it, but they had been present at the birth of a new literary form—the Fable in Slang. Perhaps the innovation was not destined to play as important a role in the history of letters as the sonnet or essay, but it would exercise a considerable influence on American writing in the coming decades. For the innovator himself, George Ade, the Fable in Slang would be a springboard to sudden wealth and fame, and it would eventually gain for him a permanent place in the annals of American humor.

Like his readers, Ade, too, failed to appreciate the possibilities of his brainchild. Beyond the fact that a few colleagues had expressed their approval, the slang fable caused no great stir, and Ade merely wrote the story off as just another attempt to get some novelty into his newspaper column. Not until ten months later did Ade try another slang fable on the readers of the *Record*. His second attempt, however, caught the eye of Herbert S. Stone, a Chicago publisher who had already brought out two books compiled from Ade's newspaper columns. Stone had a high regard for Ade, primarily because Ade's two books, *Artie* and *Pink Marsh*, had been not only brisk sellers but also artistic successes in the bargain.

Artie, a collection of sketches about an ebullient office boy employed by a Chicago business firm, had received an enthusiastic notice from one of America's most perceptive and highly regarded literary critics, William Dean Howells. "I do not believe," Howells had written, "there is a better study of American town life in the West. It [is] without the foreign admixture which is so characteristic in the East; its persons are types which one cannot fail to recognize who knows our better sort of hardworking people." Another critic compared Ade's talent for describing Americans with Dickens's for describing Englishmen.

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Stone was anxious to get another book from Ade, and he prevailed upon him to sign a contract for a novel to be called "The College Widow." In time, he began asking Ade for progress reports on the manuscript. "The publisher," Ade recalled later, "camped on my trail. He had been promised a book. I couldn't keep a department going and write a novel on the side." When it began to dawn on Ade that he had committed himself to a manuscript he would be unable to deliver, he became uneasy. His distress was made greater still by the knowledge that Stone's salesmen were on the road exhibiting beautifully bound dummy copies of "The College Widow" to prospective buyers and taking orders. America was eagerly awaiting the first novel from one of its most promising young authors.

Early in 1898, Ade was forced to tell Stone that he would be unable to deliver a manuscript. As an alternative, Stone then suggested a book of slang fables. Although reluctant to take the liberties with the English language required by writing in slang, Ade resigned himself to the inevitable. "Fables in Slang" became a regular feature of his newspaper department, appearing about once a week, generally on Saturdays.

George Ade officially became the American Aesop in December 1899, with the publication of a little black and yellow volume, *Fables in Slang*. The book (embellished by the incomparably droll illustrations of Clyde J. Newman) was an immediate best-seller, selling close to seventy thousand copies in the first year, and readers throughout America began making the acquaintance of the Good Fairy with the Lorgnette, Handsome Jethro, the Slim Girl Who Tried to Keep a Date That Was Never Made, Paducah's Favorite Comedians, Flora and Adolph, the Preacher Who Flew His Kite, the Unintentional Heroes of Centreville, the Professor Who Wanted to Be Alone, and an amazing gallery of other equally improbable characters. Ade's first newspaper fable, the one that started it all, was rewritten and appeared as "The Fable of Sister Mae Who Did as Well as Could be Expected."

Outside Chicago, where Ade's work was still relatively unknown, readers were startled by the bizarre cast of characters in that little volume. By and large, it was a cross section of America that had never been described as graphically, and certainly never with such pungency and humor. Ade's lampoons of American life—of the status seekers, culture seekers, sports fans, joiners—had arrived at precisely the right historical moment. He awoke one morning to discover he was not only famous but the possessor of an income in the neighborhood of one thousand dollars a week.

Ade was a young man of thirty-four years when he retired from the *Record* in 1900. Royalties were pouring in, he had a second book (*More Fables in Slang*) due to be published, and he had just signed a contract with the New York publisher R. H. Russell to write one fable a week for syndication. Ade's family, still living in the town of Ade's birth, Kentland, Indiana, was astounded by the size of the checks young George began sending home. "I recall the happy days," Ade once wrote, "when I received a sheaf of royalty checks every week and my father down at the bank in Indiana thought I had turned out to be a burglar. It just seemed as if everyone in the world was slapping me in the face with twenty-dollar bills."

Although Ade's success followed an approved, even conventional, American pattern, it was not quite in the style of Horatio Alger. His childhood was not spent in rags and seems to have been free of bizarre incidents and traumatic experiences. Ade lived for the first seventeen years of his life in the heart of the Indiana farm belt in a comfortable clapboard house, which he shared with his parents, two brothers, and three sisters. In later years Ade came to be considered the very archetype of the Hoosier humorist, but he was not of confirmed Hoosier stock. His father, John Ade, emigrated from England in the 1840s and settled in Ohio, where he met Adaline Bush. The couple then moved to Newton County, Indiana. George was the sixth of seven children born to the Ades (one child died in infancy), arriving into the world on February 9, 1866. His hometown of Kentland was situated about four miles from the Illinois border and about eighty miles south of Chicago. One of his earliest memories was of sitting on a high fence with some friends when he was five years old and gazing at a luminous glow in the night sky. The little group had what amounted to a ringside seat at the great Chicago Fire of 1871.

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West of the Alleghenies during the early 1870s most American children had their literary tastes shaped by William Holmes McGuffey's *Eclectic Readers*. The entire series was required reading in Kentland's one-room schoolhouse, and the manner in which Professor McGuffey pointed his morals made a permanent impression on Ade. The Fable in Slang was at bottom the McGuffey technique with a twist. The difference was that Ade added humor, updated the language, and pointed to morals that frequently emphasized such pragmatic values as shrewdness and luck in contrast to thrift and industry.

Ade was a good student—in some respects too good. He liked to read, but a fondness for books could hardly be considered an asset in a farming community such as Kentland. His parents became alarmed by what seemed to be the impractical nature of his pursuits, and, when he was fourteen, they made a determined effort to introduce him to the realities of life. A dose of farming was prescribed, and Ade spent the summers of 1880 and 1881 at a variety of tasks familiar to the husbandman—plowing, threshing, planting, and pulling cockleburs out of the corn—but the experience only deepened what almost seemed to be an innate dislike for the soil.

Purdue University, located fifty miles away in Lafayette, was only ten years old (Ade later said the plaster was hardly dry) when he arrived in the fall of 1883. Facilities there left a good deal to be desired. Ade later recalled that there were no fraternity or club houses, no athletic association, no glee club, and the "only suit of evening clothes was owned by Shrewsbury Beauregard Miller of Charleston, West Virginia." Ade nevertheless lost no time in making himself at home. He quickly learned to waltz, acquired the habit of slicking his hair with Macasar oil, became a regular patron of Lafayette's Grand Opera House, began smoking Richmond Straight Cut cigarettes, and joined Sigma Chi. Throughout his career at Purdue, Ade never gave any evidence of possessing unusual abilities as a scholar (for a number of terms he carried "conditions" in zoology and physics) or a very remarkable sense of humor. At his commencement he delivered an address entitled "The Future of Letters in the West," a solemn oration that, as he later recalled, held the prediction that "the hub of the literary universe was about to shift from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to an indefinite region that included Crawfordsville, Indianapolis and Tippecanoe County, Indiana."

After graduation, Ade settled in Lafayette, where he spent the next three years at a variety of unexciting occupations. The first hint of literary abilities beyond the ordinary came while he was employed in the publicity department of a patent medicine firm. As part of a campaign to publicize a new laxative, Ade added a word to the language—*cascaret*. Cascarets enjoyed a brief vogue among worried people in the Middle West, but when sales began to slip, Ade once again found himself out of work.

For a time at about the turn of the century, the newspapers of Chicago became a training ground for a diverse group of writers, including Theodore Dreiser, Ray Stannard Baker, Franklin P. Adams, and Ring Lardner, who left their mark on American letters. But at the time of Ade's arrival in the city in 1890, the most prominent names in Chicago's newspaper world were Finley Peter Dunne and Eugene Field. After Ade lost his job at the patent medicine firm, a fraternity brother of his, John T. McCutcheon, who was then working as an illustrator on the *Chicago Morning News* (later the *Record*), arranged an interview that resulted in Ade getting a tryout as a reporter. Ade's industry and interest in people suited him perfectly for journalism, and as a general-assignment reporter he covered many of the major news stories of the 1890s, among them the explosion of the *Tioga* in Chicago harbor, the conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties in 1892, and the Sullivan-Corbett fight in New Orleans. In 1893 he was given his own column, "Stories of the Streets and of the Town," the illustrations for which were supplied by his friend McCutcheon. The editorial page of the *Record* soon became the talk of the Chicago newspaper world, but this was a development for which Ade could claim only partial credit. "Stories of the Streets and of the Town" ran directly opposite "Sharps and Flats" by Eugene Field.

Ade filled his column with realistic little portraits of Chicago life. The stories exhibited many moods—poignant, funny, sad—and chronicled all aspects of life in the city. Today they are invaluable samples of Americana that

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offer a vivid and accurate picture of Chicago during the 1890s. Referring to these newspaper columns, Ade later wrote: "I never considered myself a humorist, just a realist. I told plain, unvarnished stories of human life in compact form." Histories of the rise of realism in America generally omit Ade's name, but the books collected from his columns—*Artie*, *Pink Marsh*, and *Doc Horne*—were of primary importance to the movement toward realism. Howells, in fact, had been so impressed by them that in 1898 he even paid Ade a visit in an effort to recruit him as a full-time novelist in the realistic tradition. But that was before the publication of *Fables in Slang*.

The appeal of *Fables in Slang* was close to being universal. Not only were the fables applauded by readers of Sunday supplements (in which they frequently first appeared after 1900), but by the nation's higher critics as well. Brander Matthews and Howells both voiced their approval, but it was William Allen White who presented Ade with his most enthusiastic notice. "I would rather have written *Fables in Slang*," White said, "than be President." The fables probably caught on so quickly because the characters—even at their most ludicrous and grotesque—were so unquestionably genuine. Part of the legacy of Ade's small-town upbringing was an interest in people as individuals, and his characters were saturated with a variety of qualities and peculiarities that made them, in the words of H. L. Mencken, "as American as buckwheat cakes." Their preoccupations, prejudices, conversational idiosyncracies, and tricks of mind give them a quintessentially American quality that had its counterpart in the essentially English qualities of such Dickens characters as Mr. Wopsle and Paul Dombey.

Is it possible, by any stretch of the imagination, to conceive of "The Fable of Sister Mae Who Did as Well as Could Be Expected" as taking place anywhere but in America?

> Two Sisters lived in Chicago, the Home of Opportunity.
>
> Luella was a Good Girl, who had taken prizes at the Mission Sunday School, but she was Plain, much. Her Features did not seem to know the value of Team Work. Her Clothes fit her Intermittently, as it were . . .
>
> Luella found Employment at a Hat Factory. All she had to do was to put Red Linings in Hats for the Country Trade; and every Saturday Evening when Work was called on account of Darkness, the Boss met her as she went out and crowded three Dollars on her.
>
> The other Sister was Different.
>
> She began as Mary, then changed to Marie, and her Finish was Mae . . .
>
> She was short on Intellect but long on Shape.
>
> The Vain Pleasures of the World attracted her. By skipping the Long Words she could read how Rupert Banisford led Sybil Gray into the Conservatory and made Love that scorched the Begonias . . .

Marie soon finds work as a cashier in a lunchroom, and in no time at all the proprietor notices the male customers hovering about the counter to pay their bills. He also notices that the receipts of his establishment have doubled. Marie has a date book that "had to be kept on the Double Entry System." After turning down a number of prospective suitors, she marries "a Bucket Shop Man, who was not Handsome, but was awful generous."

> Shortly after . . . Wheat jumped twenty-two points, and the Husband didn't do a thing.
>
> Mae bought a Thumb Ring and a Pug Dog . . . and decided she wanted to live in a House, because, in a flat, One could never be sure of One's Neighbors . . . Mae bought an Automobile, and blew her Allowance against Beauty Doctors. The Smell of Cooking made her Faint, and she couldn't see where the Working Classes came in at all . . .
>
> In the Hey-Day of Prosperity did Mae forget Luella? No, indeed.
>
> She took Luella away from the Hat Factory, where the Pay was three Dollars a Week, and gave her a Position as Assistant Cook at five Dollars.
>
> Moral: *Industry and Perseverance bring a sure Reward.*

"Fables in Slang" was a convenient but not strictly accurate title for Ade's stories since they are neither fables nor slang. They are not fables because no one was less of a moralist or a reformer than Ade. Although turn-of-the-century Chicago was one of the most reform-minded milieus ever in American history—Ida Tarbell and Upton Sinclair were among Ade's contemporaries—Ade seems to have been oblivious to the conditions in the stockyards and to the slums being created in the city by the swarms of immigrants from Europe. Although Ade was a good friend of Finley Peter Dunne, the creator of "Mr. Dooley," Ade's stories are as free of political and social comment as Dunne's are full of them. As for his language, Ade did not rely on

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slang as much as on his extraordinary ability to give language a twist; he went to great lengths to avoid conventional expressions, slang or otherwise, to enliven his stories.

Ade required only a couple of sentences to set the stage for a fable. Here, for example, is a description of a town. "Nubbinville . . . is near the Jumping-Off Place in Pike County. It is one of those Towns that seemed to be trying to hold two Farms apart." His descriptions of people are equally to the point. "Once upon a Time there was a slim Girl with a Forehead which was Shiny and Protuberant, like a Bartlett Pear. When asked to put Something in an Autograph Album she invariably wrote the Following, in a tall, dislocated Back-Hand:

Life is Real; Life is Earnest;
And the Grave is not its Goal.

It was a varied gallery of citizens who turned up in the fables—vaudeville performers, politicians, athletes, salesmen, farmers. Almost at once, similar characters began appearing in the works of other writers. Ade's influence on American writing at this time was enormous, and it is probably no exaggeration to say that for a number of years he had more imitators than any other American writer.

Among the early readers of *Fables in Slang* was H. L. Mencken, then on the staff of the *Baltimore Sun*. "I operated a so-called funny column," Mencken recalled later, "and like my colleagues near and far, I essayed to manufacture fables in slang. What miserable botches they were! How easy it was to imitate Ade's manner—and how impossible to imitate his matter!"

Ade, a modest man, did not allow praise to turn his head. Even as sales soared and *Fables in Slang* was named book of the year for 1901, he continued to be skeptical about the ability of the fables to please readers. One reason, perhaps, was that he found them so easy to write. He was generally able to produce one at a sitting, and his original copy seldom needed any revisions. When Stone asked for more fables to be used for a second book, he had no difficulty in complying. But he still regarded the fuss as too good to be true. "The idea," he wrote, "was to grab a lot of careless money before the reading public recovered its equilibrium, and then, later on, with bags of gold piled in the doorway . . . return to the consecrated job of writing long and photographic reports of life in the Middle West."

After the success of *Fables in Slang*, Ade's career took an unforeseen turn. Within six months of leaving the *Record*, he had entered into collaboration with Alfred Wathall, a composer, to write a musical comedy. An incurable theater buff since childhood, when in Kentland's McCullough Hall he had seen road companies performing such shows as *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne*, Ade was aware that his new career would not meet with the approval of Howells. "I have promised William Dean Howells in a never-to-be-forgotten interview," he observed at the time, "that I will further consecrate my efforts to unadorned realism. But . . . hang it all, the dollar sign is luminous in the sky. Another good man gone wrong."

Ade's collaboration with Wathall resulted in *The Sultan of Sulu*, a musical comedy in the tradition of the Savoyard operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan. The opportunity for a Broadway production was supplied by Henry W. Savage, who saw the play performed at McVicker's Theater in Chicago. The decision to bring the play to New York proved to be a wise move by Savage and a lucky break for Ade, for after opening at Wallack's Theater on December 29, 1902, it ran for 192 performances and was one of the big hits of the season. Two songs from the score, "Since I First Met You" and "Remorse," made the hit parade. The final quatrain of "Remorse" concludes with a line that has since solidified into a cliché and has become a permanent part of the language:

My eyes are bleared, my coppers hot,
I'd like to eat, but I cannot!
It is no time for mirth and laughter—
The cold, gray dawn of the morning after.

By early 1900 the quantity and variety of Ade's writing—the seemingly effortless manner in which he went from realistic fiction, to humor, to musical comedy—had acquired for him a reputation as one of the nation's most prolific and versatile humorists. After completing its Broadway run, *The Sultan of Sulu* was succeeded at Wallack's by another Ade musical, *Peggy From Paris*. Ade made his name on Broadway as a librettist, but he was anxious to write straight comedy. America, he said, was "simply reeking with material to be transplanted to the stage." Ade's next two

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plays—*The County Chairman* and *The College Widow*—mark his finest achievement as a playwright. In these plays, Ade simply transplanted the character types of the fables to the stage and thereby became, along with George M. Cohan, one of the pioneers in introducing American themes and material to the American theater.

Nineteen-hundred-and-four was a halcyon year for Ade and marked the high point of his popularity. At the time, he had two plays on Broadway and two others on the road. "Early to bed and early to rise," Ade had observed, in a remark that has since become famous, "and you will meet very few prominent people." Evidently, if one can believe the Broadway gossip, he began following his own advice, and his closest friends now included George M. Cohan, John Drew, Otis Skinner, and Booth Tarkington.

Unmarried and with an income in the neighborhood of five thousand dollars a week, Ade lived in fine style. A favorite diversion was making late-evening forays up and down Eighth Avenue in a taxi and pirating watermelons from fruit stands. George Jean Nathan, the theater critic, once recalled entering the Knickerbocker Hotel to find Ade and Tarkington with thirty melons lined up on the bar. For each melon, according to Nathan, the two Hoosiers had a brilliant story of resourcefulness and daring.

Ade is remembered as being among the most affable of men, gregarious after an initial shyness wore off, and particularly courtly toward women. Pictures of him show a tall, slender, good-looking man, with a nose that leans slightly to the left, a high forehead, and a shrewd perceptive expression. They also show an elegant dresser who followed the fashions in clothes. Why Ade never married must ever remain one of the curious mysteries of American letters.

Only a handful of plays in the history of the American theater have received as enthusiastic a welcome as that accorded *The College Widow*. Reviewers from New York's twenty dailies were unanimous in their praise, with verdicts ranging from "Whangdoodle Walloper" (*Evening Journal*) to "a tumult of delight" (*Daily Mail*). More remarkable was the reaction of the first-night audience. George Marion, the director, recalled that "the audience kept up the applause at the finish of the third act until the curtain arose on the fourth act, a matter of some twelve to fifteen minutes." Applause and laughter had, in fact, been so stormy it was considered advisable to have Ade make a short speech. "You will have perceived this is not a problem play," he began. This classic understatement, characteristic of Ade's humor, brought so much more laughter that Ade was hardly able to say anything more. *The College Widow* is remembered as one of the few Broadway openings at which the applause never ceased during the intermissions.

The College Widow (presumably the plot follows the idea of the novel Ade had intended to write) was the first play to concern itself with the preoccupation with athletics that first gripped American college life toward the end of the 1800s and that continues to the present day. The story takes place on the campus of Atwater College, described by the program as "an inland institution of learning lying east of Minnesota and somewhere west of New York." Little Atwater doesn't stand a chance in the big football game against powerful Bingham. Tension builds throughout the play until, in the final act, Billy Bolton, the son of a millionaire alumnus, makes a mighty touchdown run to save the day. If America in the last sixty years has been inundated by plays, novels, and films following a similar pattern, Ade can be held directly responsible. *The College Widow* turned out to be one of his most enduring innovations.

Savage had done a magnificent job of staging for *The College Widow*, but differences between Ade and the producer began to surface after the opening of *The Sho-Gun*, a musical that was greeted by mixed reviews and that closed after 125 performances. Ade could not resist observing that the production had been, in part, responsible for *The Sho-Gun* not having a longer run. Another difference of opinion concerned the size of the playwright's royalties; but the most significant difference centered on the plays themselves. Savage would have been happy to continue producing musicals by Ade, but Ade's determination to write straight comedy led to a dispute that proved irreconcilable.

Ade had, in fact, become quite fierce in disparaging his work as librettist. "A good musical comedy consists largely of disorderly conduct interrupted by talk," he said irritably.

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"The man who provides the interruptions is called the librettist." The end of Ade's collaboration with Savage, which was one of the most successful producer-playwright combinations in the history of Broadway, came after *The Bad Samaritan*, an undistinguished comedy that found a well-deserved oblivion after fifteen performances. It was Ade's first unqualified failure.

There is some evidence that Ade had by this time become a difficult man to get along with, a fussy and irritable bachelor. He began complaining of a variety of physical disorders, including dizziness, nausea, and periods of depression, which were brought on, he said, by the strain of constantly having to attend rehearsals and by the feverish periods of revising and rewriting that preceded every opening.

Most of all he came to dread the tensions accompanying every opening night. For one play—*Father and the Boys*—he contrived to be in Bermuda when the play had its premiere. Although he continued to turn out plays with remarkable speed, Ade was never able to duplicate the success of *The College Widow*.

Ade closed out a spectacularly successful theater career in 1910—only three of his eleven plays failed to make money—with *The Old Town*, a musical written in collaboration with Gustav Luders. His decision to retire was prompted partly by the knowledge that he had lost his passion for the theater and partly for reasons of health. "Creative writing is a fearful drain," he wrote, an admission that for the first time he was finding writing difficult. "My doctor pointed out that I couldn't enjoy royalties in the cemetery."

By 1910 the public's awareness of Ade as a literary figure had begun to fade, and it is easy to see why. Ade's investments in Indiana farmland had long since removed the necessity to write for a living, and he began giving over the bulk of his time to nonliterary pursuits. On one occasion, he admitted as much to an interviewer, adding that the only interest that had remained with him since the turn of the century was golf. So great was his enthusiasm for the sport that he even had a nine-hole course with a clubhouse built on his estate. His other pastimes included going to horse races, baseball games, and movies. An old interest in travel reasserted itself, and he made trips to Europe, the Orient, and the Caribbean. He also took an active interest in his alma mater, Purdue, and served for a number of years as a university trustee. For a while he was the grand chancellor of his old fraternity Sigma Chi.

During the First World War Ade was director of publicity for the Indiana Council of Defense and wrote news bulletins for students away in the service. Hazleden, his thirty-acre country estate, was the scene each Fourth of July of an enormous outdoor party to which people from all over northeast Indiana were invited and at which the number of guests often exceeded ten thousand people. Much of his time was merely spent fraternizing with neighbors and friends. It was a singular, even strange, kind of retirement for a literary man, and one that was plainly not calculated to keep Ade's name before the public.

Of course, Ade continued to write fables. Five volumes of fables (*Forty Modern Fables*, *The Girl Proposition*, *People You Know*, *Breaking Into Society*, *True Bills*, *Knocking the Neighbors*) appeared between 1902 and 1914. By then Ade had realized that slang was exercising a tyranny over his life and that he had acquired a reputation as a kind of "professional slangster." On a number of occasions he publicly protested against the development. "When I used the word 'slang,' " he once wrote, "I meant the vernacular—which is really another way of saying unconventional Americanisms—rather than out-and-out slang." But to no avail. Whenever he was interviewed by a newspaper reporter, he was inevitably quoted as speaking slang, and he was even cited by such language scholars as H. L. Mencken and Eric Partridge as being an authority on the subject.

Numerous reasons can be advanced for the inexorable decline in Ade's reputation that took place after 1910, the year he retired from Broadway. Ade's particular style of humor—with its emphasis on rural America, quaint character types, exaggeration, and slang—seems to belong more to the nineteenth-century tradition than to the twentieth, the tradition that produced Artemus Ward, Sam Slick, and Mr. Dooley and that saw humor in dialect stories and ethnic stereotypes. Ade reached the pinnacle of his celebrity in 1904, but if the adulation had been fanatical, it had also been

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uncritical, and as new literary styles evolved and new writers emerged, Ade's writings were forgotten—and so was Ade. With the arrival of the Depression, America's interest in laughter probably reached an all-time low, and so little was heard from Ade after this time that many people naturally assumed he was dead. (Eric Partridge, for example, in *Slang Today and Yesterday* referred to Ade as having died in 1933.) After 1930 Ade's name held little significance for most Americans—except, perhaps, for crossword puzzle fans who knew him as the three-letter equivalent for "Hoosier Humorist."

Ade never enjoyed talking about himself, and while he was personally acquainted with two presidents, William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, and had countless friends in show business, the arts, and the sports world, there were few who knew him well. In 1925, at the request of Ray Long, an admirer of Ade's and a longtime friend, who at the time was editor of Hearst's *International Magazine*, Ade wrote an article "For the First Time in My Life I'm Going to Talk About Myself." It was the first of what turned out to be an extensive series of delightful recollections. The picture they project—and which, one suspects, Ade consciously tried to project—is that of a country boy who never took himself too seriously and who was taken from behind by fame and fortune. These reminiscences are what the world had come to expect of Ade—glib, offhand, chatty, funny. They reveal one side of his personality.

A truer insight into Ade's thoughts and feelings is found in his ironically titled essay "The Joys of Single Blessedness," which he wrote five years earlier. According to Ade, he wrote the essay to explode the delusion that the bachelor is a carefree person, and while it is a series of ostensibly comic observations, discerning readers will find little to laugh at in this piece. "Sometimes a bachelor gets to taking such good care of himself," he remarks at one point, "he forgets that some day he will need six friends to act as pallbearers." The impression one receives is that Ade in middle age was lonely and not very happy. "As the autumn days grow shorter, and each milestone begins to look like a tombstone," he says in conclusion, "the bachelor becomes less and less declamatory regarding the joys of single blessedness." This essay, far from being comic, is one of the saddest pieces in American literature.

Some of Ade's disillusionment can perhaps be accounted for by recalling that he was one of the few individuals who seems to have achieved everything he ever set out to do and who made a great deal of money in the bargain. At the end, he had nothing left to strive for. "When I was a reporter," he once wrote, "I wanted to be a traveling correspondent. After I had been over the map I wanted to run my own department. Then I wanted to see my name on a book which would sell 50,000 copies. When I realized that wish was I happy? No. I wanted to write a play which would remain in New York for a year. That miracle came to pass. . . ." The result was that his spectacular success left him without any new worlds to conquer beyond that of improving his golf handicap.

Ade never suffered from the delusions of grandeur that so often afflict successful authors in middle age, and his lack of literary pretensions was rare. American letters has few parallels for an incident that took place in 1925 shortly after the publication of *An American Tragedy*. After the first edition arrived in the bookstores, it was noticed that Dreiser had described one of his characters in terms that matched almost word for word Ade's description of Cousin Gus in "The Fable of the Two Mandolin Players and the Willing Performer." Asked by the *New York Tribune* if he intended to charge Dreiser with plagiarism, Ade replied: "While some of us have been building chicken coops or possibly bungalows, Mr. Dreiser has been erecting skyscrapers. . . . If in building one of his massive structures he used a brick from my pile, goodness knows he was welcome to it, and no questions were asked or will be asked."

Ade had, of course, always regarded himself more as an entertainer than as a serious writer, but some observers interpreted this incident as a reflection of Ade's lack of interest in serious literature. In middle age, Ade did present a paradoxical picture: that of a retired author with only a minimal interest in current literature. Many had been baffled by the manner in which Ade spent his leisure time—more in the manner of a retired stockbroker than a retired writer. Ade had never really been interested in ideas or social reform, and he made no effort to keep abreast of modern

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literature, but as a young man he had on occasion showed himself as a surprisingly penetrating observer of the literary fads and practices of the day.

Although he was unassuming about them, Ade possessed singular, if limited, literary gifts, and he had the good fortune to arrive on the literary scene at precisely the right historical moment for a person with his gifts. To what extent he was aware of having permanently shaped the language, it is hard to say. He seemed, however, to have been more embarrassed than flattered by the numerous books, plays, and novels written in imitation of *The College Widow*. It is, of course, through the Fables in Slang that he has been remembered, and no anthology of American humor issued after 1900 could possibly consider itself complete without including a handful of his fables.

America was a much different country in 1944, the year Ade died after a series of heart attacks, than it had been in the pre–World War I era when he enjoyed his greatest popularity, so the fact that all of Ade's books were out of print at the time of his death should come as no surprise. What does come as a surprise is that, in the more than forty years that have elapsed since his death, there have been isolated but unmistakable signs that his works continue to find loyal fans in each successive generation of American readers. Such readers are generally easy to spot, sometimes from a tendency to interject Ade's morals ("Those who are Entitled to it Get it sooner or later"; "Always keep a straight Face"; "Don't try to Account for Anything," etc.) into conversations teetering on the brink of banality or boredom, sometimes from an ingrained habit of keeping well-thumbed copies of *Fables in Slang* within easy reach, to be referred to in moments of stress for their tonic qualities.

One persuasive indication of the continuing popularity of Ade's style of humor was a New York theatrical revival of *Leave It to Jane*, a 1917 musical with music by Jerome Kern, which was based on Ade's play *The College Widow* and which ran for 928 performances. Another was the experience of a New York radio commentator who had always considered his interest in Ade to be "a personal crotchet" and who once succumbed to the temptation to read some of Ade's fables over the air. The size and enthusiasm of the response was ample proof that an enjoyment of Ade was a "crotchet" shared by an enormous number of contemporary Americans. Further proof is the fact that *Fables in Slang*, *More Fables in Slang*, *Artie*, and *Pink Marsh* are once more back in print, fitting homage to the author S. J. Perelman called "one of our greatest humorists, if not the most outstanding humorist, America has yet come up with."

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North & South

For Emily Grosholz,
who asked about meter.

DONALD DAVIE

Emily, you were sick
Of Arctic computations.
And you would go to Zen,
New Mexico, the Aegean,
Anywhere, to escape them.

The unfortunate Isaac Newton!
Philosopher of science,
You lived with his likes all day.
But herding them north of the Alps,
Weren't you carried away?

And poetry now, as for
Many another, must
Reconstitute, restore?
Well, sweet mole, you go
About it the right way:

Enjoying the lovely fibs,
But nosing the veins of the clay
Deep under the uttered fictions
Chambered and tunneled for: breath
Under the modelling thumb.

Breath, the sculpting of that!
Not synaesthesia, not
Spectacular mental pictures,
Not fables, not generous maxims—
Is this what you'd be at?

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Well, and you are right;
Underground, groping and dumb,
Where there are no more rules
That schools can teach, but only
A trembling rule of thumb.

Emily . . . Persephone!
You see breath wreathe on the cold
Air of an Arctic morning
Or fogging a southern glass;
In any and every landscape.

Its shape when it utters "Eve"
Is as long as the edge of a roof
Or a day that seems never to end
On a Mediterranean island.
And yet, new friend, we mine it.

If we would learn to scan,
We have to be exact;
Indeed, Newtonian.
The syllable's breath at the mercy
Of Apollonian measure . . .

Prosody has been thought
Also a science, and
A baffling one; for what
Kind habitat is built on
The count and crimp of breath?

Emily, I can only
Enter a plea for the north,
The sternness of long evenings:
Sun and moon together
In skies over the Orkneys.

DONALD DAVIE, professor of English at Vanderbilt University, is the author of *Articulate Energy: An Inquiry into the Syntax of English poetry.* His *Collected Poems* was published in 1972.

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To Charlotte Brontë

JOAN ALESHIRE

Your teacher's letter, when it comes
at last, seems like another lesson
in conversational French: "It is necessary
that you not write so often. I have not
time to answer more than two times
a year." You run your fingers
over the fine script, over the seal,
as if the touch of ink, of wax, could
bring him closer than words placed clearly,
evenly, pointed and impenetrable as a fence.
In the bare sitting room, watching your sisters
bend their smooth heads to their work—
flies caught in webs of their own invention—
you wonder if you imagined afternoons
in a Belgian schoolroom, speaking a French
you've almost forgotten, delighting
your teacher, whose eyes became pools
that invited you to swim.
You begin a reply: "I am well aware
I burden you with words. I will try
to restrain myself." Over a hundred years
later, writing a man, I use almost
your words, my usual speech formal
with hesitation. I think of you searching
for the French "restreindre," staring,
as if you'd find it in the moors—gray
and undulating as the waves that keep
England from Belgium, bare as the years
you must fill alone. "Me restreindre,"
you write at last, gripping the pen
as other words—unruly, unkempt,
so like my own—shoulder their way
between the lines: "My life is nothing without you."

JOAN ALESHIRE teaches at Warren Wilson College and is the author of *Cloud Train*, a book of poems.

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Books

More at Home than Out of Step

EDWARD SHILS

OUT OF STEP: AN UNQUIET LIFE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. *By Sidney Hook. Harper & Row. $29.95.*

I

John Dewey's philosophy has its limitations, but it was a great good fortune for Sidney Hook when he discovered it. It might have been designed for him. In him it found its best embodiment: its level-headedness, its rationality, its openness to new experience and readiness to consider every argument and any alternative in the light of experience and reason. In Sidney Hook's hands, it is emphatic in argument but never dogmatic in beliefs. John Dewey's philosophy is a generous one. It never excludes its opponents as irredeemable. It excludes no one—neither individuals nor strata—from the range of its sympathies.

Despite the facts that Sidney Hook has lived most of his life in New York and that intellectuals living in New York have made up most of his friends, interlocutors, and opponents, he has a genuine sense of affinity for his fellowman and for American society—unlike many of his fellow intellectuals in New York who unceasingly bore in their consciousness the burden of being Americans in a society in which they did not feel at home. Neither Paris, nor London, nor Moscow, nor Berlin has ever been the center of the world for him. One gets the impression that Sidney Hook never yearned to live in another century or in another society. He has never thought that it would be better to be a Frenchman or an Englishman or a German or a Russian. He knows that there is much in American society that needs improvement, but he does not think that the improvement requires a fundamental, disjunctive transformation.

Sidney Hook does not have the rhetoric or the voice of piety, but he knows very well what it is. When he speaks of his teacher Morris Cohen's attitude, he expresses it in the words of Santayana: "Piety was 'reverence for the sources of one's being.' " He then goes on to present Cohen's view of those who "went beyond rational criticism and reform and denounced America—either from the standpoint of an impossibly perfectionist ideal or, more often, as defenders of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union—[who] appeared to him to be violating the adage not to spit in the waters from which one has drunk." Hook seems to allow Cohen to represent his own views when he says that Cohen's "sympathy, as well as his understanding of the American heritage, became stronger with each passing year."

Sidney Hook is a quiet patriot. He takes for granted being American; he is careful to distinguish patriotism and love of country from chauvinism, jingoism, and nationalism. He has received and affirmed the traditions of the equality of opportunity, of the rule of law, and of individual freedom, pondered them, affirmed them, and taken them as the highest of goods in his outlook on the world. He accepts traditions; he emphasizes that his radicalism has been a traditional American radicalism. Although, in principle, Sidney Hook has regarded philosophy as a solvent of tradition, and has said less about philosophy as a means of discovering and improving traditions and finding out what is sound and fruitful in them, his attachment to America is not just to the

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America of the present or to an America of the future. It is also to a conception of America that includes its past.

Unlike so many of the American intellectuals with whom he has been associated—in the *Partisan Review*, for example—Sidney Hook has never railed against bourgeois society. He has never hated bourgeois society. Although his philosophy says little for tradition, he accepts and espouses many of the traditions of the society and the civilization in which he grew up. Even when he was a brash adolescent in high school, and a less brash but nevertheless radical undergraduate, sympathetic toward communism, he never gave any impression of hating Western society, and least of all American society. Sidney Hook always felt at home in America; he never yearned for "abroad," though he has experienced a more cosmopolitan culture than many of his lofty xenophilic contemporaries. Sidney Hook never pretended to be a superior European intellectual. He greatly admired Dostoyevski, but he did not turn him into a prophet of the end of bourgeois civilization. Sidney Hook is no prophet of the end of bourgeois civilization; he has never written melodramatic, bloodcurdling diagnoses and prognostications. He does not have any of the airs of an intellectual who sneezes in New York when it rains in Paris or London.

II

Sidney Hook has entitled his autobiography *Out of Step*. "Out of step" with whom? An outstanding person is always "out of step" in some respects. If he were entirely "in step," he would be no different from anyone else and hence, by definition, not outstanding. So with whom was he "out of step"? He was out of step with American academics in that he was probably the first American university teacher to study thoroughly the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and he was the first American university teacher to publish a scholarly book on the subject. (Vladimir G. Simkhovitch was an economic historian at Columbia who had studied Marx and Engels but never in the systematic and comprehensive way that Sidney Hook had done; E. R. A. Seligman was also moderately familiar with the writings of Marx and Engels when he wrote *The Economic Interpretation of History*. There was a doctoral dissertation by Morton Bober at Harvard in the 1920s on *Karl Marx' Interpretation of History*. It is interesting to note that three of these four early authors of books on Marx were connected with Columbia University.)

Sidney Hook was out of step with other proponents of Marx of his own generation inasmuch as his interpretation diverged from the then-dominant scientistic interpretations of the ideas of Marx.

Although he was not entirely unsympathetic with communist ideals or with the Soviet Union or with the Communist party of the United States in the late 1920s and early 1930s, he was never a member of that Party or a wholehearted supporter of the Party; nor was he ever unqualified in his admiration for the Soviet Union, even in the time of his greatest admiration for it. These things happened before the stampede of the fellow travelers; and when that began, Sidney Hook was among the small number who attempted to discourage the stampede. If the metaphor of a marching stride is appropriate in speaking of a stampede, Sidney Hook was also "out of step" with the stampeding intellectuals of the 1930s. He continued to be "out of step" with the "secret battalion" of the fellow travelers and their now-dispersed but still-influential successors who are more insistent that the United States disarm than that the Soviet Union should do so. He is certainly "out of step" with the "anti-anti-communists."

There are, however, things in life and society that are far more important than the beliefs of Karl Marx or the Communist party of the United States or even the Soviet Union and its fellow travelers in the liberal-democratic societies. After all, these things are all of negative value, and the last of them is of very negative value, so that being "out of step" with them is being "in step" with something of much more positive value. Sidney Hook was never out of step in those things that are really important: the maintenance of civil society, the well-being of his own country, academic institutions, and, above all else, the cultivation of truth as the object of intellectual activity and for truthfulness in conduct. Sidney Hook was never "out of step" with the central values of liberal-democratic society.

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III

The New York—more precisely the Brooklyn—in which Sidney Hook was a schoolboy, the Manhattan of his college days at City College and his days as a graduate student at Columbia, was never a city for clergymen's daughters. It was a rough city, although more orderly than it is now, a city of hard work, respectable poverty, ambition, and hope. Sidney Hook came from a poor Jewish family that encouraged him to study. He was a bookish boy and youth, bored by his teachers and mischievously mocking their ignorance. His early life was an enclosed life from within which the larger life of the city was looked upon with respect and even awe. The Jewish boys and girls with whom he became friendly were readers, eager to know about the wide world of which they had no experience. They began as outsiders looking in. The world on which they looked was an austere one that had little interest in them. Their teachers were dry, inflexible, rigidly mechanical in their teaching; they must have been put off by their unrefined, uncouth, eager pupils, and they kept them at a distance. Sidney Hook's teachers were parts of that remote, still Christian firmament which Hook's own generation looked upon from afar, as through the looking glass, with distrustful awe, apprehension, resentment, and respect.

Nothing seems further from the United States of the 1980s than the New York of the 1920s and 1930s. The solid parts of American society were still very stolid. As a whole, much of American society and culture was still puritanical. It still had a center. Large parts of the society on the periphery looked up to that stolid center. At the center, puritanism and patriotism were combined with a rather unimaginative anticipation of a continuing increase in material well-being. There was little doubt about the value of scientific knowledge and its advancement. There was truculent pride in American society and confidence in its moral rightness in the world. It was a time of patriotism, on the one side verging into xenophobia and self-righteous chauvinism, on the other into regrets over a lost paradise and "the search for a usable past." The xenophobia and self-righteous chauvinism were more prominent in the beginning of the period; the regrets about the lost American past became accentuated and, as the period went on, brought out a hatred of the American present. Once the country settled down after the First World War, American society resumed its prior compound of individual diligence and ambitious striving in most of the society, with vigorous entrepreneurial activity, shortsighted self-interest among businessmen and farmers, and a mixture of corrupt conduct, civility, and efforts to be efficient in the political and governmental spheres. High stiff collars, rimless spectacles, and felt hats were the sartorial manifestations of the dominant tone of the times.

In parts of the periphery, and especially in the bohemian circles of New York, puritanism and patriotism were angrily criticized. Radicalism had always been a peripheral phenomenon, which had become much reduced through most of the 1920s. But by the end of that first of the two decades between the wars, a new kind of radicalism came onto the scene. Political radicalism, which had previously been to some extent an affair of a very small section of the educated classes, grew through the 1930s on a scale which American society had not seen before.

In the 1920s, criticism of American society was confined to a small number of publicists who wrote so vaguely that their criticism could scarcely be discerned—among them were Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, and Harold Stearns. There was H. L. Mencken, the jocular, good-natured philistine-baiter. There was also a small number of critics in universities—most notably Irving Babbitt and the remnants of the genteel Anglophile academic—whose voice was seldom heard in public. None of them had much of a following. Among literary men and women, the numbers were greater, but few of them were popular except among other like-minded persons.

Further out in the periphery, the Jews of Eastern European origin were beginning to stir out of their orthodoxy, driven and harassed by their monetary worries and desires and their ignorance of the language and the culture of the great world. They were linked to the center by their grateful patriotism and their hampered will to acquire its language and manners: they shared with the center its belief in the rightfulness of ambition and respectability. The first appearances from the cocoon took place in the generation born

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between 1900 and 1905, whose parents had come to the United States mainly in the decade before the turn of the century. Sidney Hook was such a chrysalis. Ernest Nagel was another. Lionel Trilling still another. They were the best of that generation, and they were also superior to the next generation, which had its path laid down for it. The world was a little easier for that next generation to deal with. The stolid center had weakened in the Depression; puritanism in economic and sexual affairs was showing many of the cracks of fatigue. But more important in the academic world was the pioneering of Sidney Hook and his friends.

IV

Sidney Hook had no teachers who took any personal interest in him until he went up to City College, where he was already determined to study philosophy. How that interest emerged and grew he does not tell us. The boys read lots of books, and they did much to educate each other.

Some of the boys in Sidney Hook's circle had a lively interest in the great world, although they had no contact with it except through newspapers and books. That world was also the world of the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the violent suppression of radicals—the "Red raids"—of the first years following the war. Radicalism was prominently displayed in the newspapers. That was the social soil from which Sidney Hook's socialism grew.

It would have been difficult for Sidney Hook not to have been a socialist, given the distance that separated him from his teachers and their own drab distrust of him, and his own omnivorous reading, dawning moral sensibility, and his ratiocinative propensity. Sidney Hook in his youth and early manhood was a very special type of radical by virtue of his intellectual scrupulousness and his capacity for rational argument.

He does not say anything in his autobiography about how he first encountered the writings of Marx and Engels. Of course, socialism and communism were before the mind's eye of anyone who read the newspapers in 1918 and 1919, when the Russian Revolution was receiving so much attention and when radicals were being abused in the press and being physically assaulted by ruffians, policemen, and agents of the Department of Justice. It is likely, too, that some of his classmates came from families in which socialism and communism were supported or at least discussed. There were certainly like-minded students in his classes at the City College of New York. Once he discovered Marxism, he moved into it very easily. In any case, by the time Sidney Hook went up to City College he was already a socialist. He received no encouragement from his teachers there to persist in those views.

Sidney Hook was not one of those brilliant pupils who take a double-starred first in classical moderations or moral sciences, nor did he attend a famous public school or lycée. He did, however, have the luck to be an undergraduate at City College of New York, which for poor boys of Eastern European Jewish stock was an amalgam of Christ Church, Oxford, Trinity College, Cambridge, and the École normale supérieure. Many of the teachers there were at best little more than respectable place-holders. Many were philistines of respectability, defensively ill at ease with their insolent, unworldly, intellectually eager and excitable, sharp-witted, and tactless pupils. Of course, there were many who were simply ambitious to get ahead in the struggle for existence, or to go beyond the status of their impoverished parents who were, to a great extent, workers in the garment trades, small shopkeepers, and small businessmen. The undergraduates played a great part in educating one another by challenging themselves intellectually.

There was, however, one teacher who did educate them and left a very powerful imprint on them. This was Morris R. Cohen, an embittered, rasping, disappointed sage, resembling in some respects an unsuccessful small Jewish businessman, who was also a man of universal knowledge and extraordinary intellectual courage. Cohen's universal scope of knowledge, the cutting sharpness of his criticism of everyone's beliefs, his limitless desire to know, and his demanding skepticism put Hook onto a course from which he never turned back. Cohen's skepticism did not dissuade Hook from socialism, but it kept it from ever becoming dogmatic.

From Cohen, Sidney Hook moved on to John Dewey at Columbia. It was obviously a

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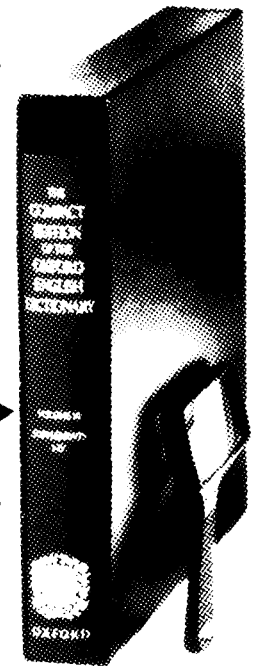

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reinforcement of Hook's intellectual curiosity to pass under his new master, so different from his earlier one. Cohen shared with Hook a love of argument in philosophical questions, which, given Cohen's universal curiosity, included anything in which the human mind could be interested. Cohen's limitless eagerness to know fed and educated Hook's own intellectual passion. His aggressive skepticism sharpened Hook's argumentative capacity.

To live in the atmosphere of John Dewey was quite a different thing. Dewey was more generous and more ruminative than Cohen; he took no pleasure in cutting down an intellectual adversary, and with a student like Sidney Hook, he was very encouraging. Like Cohen, Hook learned to disentangle the arguments of his interlocutors; unlike Cohen, he did not attempt to embarrass them while doing so. Cohen was critical to the point of rudeness; Hook with all his combativeness was never rude or discourteous to his opponents. Cohen sometimes argued by sneers; Hook never did. Some of Hook's rhetorical qualities must have come from John Dewey, who never felt any need to support and reinforce his arguments by debaters' tricks that would discomfit his opponents.

It is certain that Hook must have brought into the presence of his two teachers the inclinations that they helped to form. Nevertheless, the two of them helped to form a mind which had its own style and direction but which also bore the marks of both of these remarkable men, so very different from each other in intellectual mood and procedure. From Cohen, Hook gained an additional impetus to his demand for clear definitions; from Dewey, he gained his willingness to consider generously ideas in their incipiency and to help his interlocutor to discover his own beliefs by the questions put before him.

Since Sidney Hook is not constitutionally a captious, faultfinding man, he had greater affinity with Dewey than with Cohen. Cohen was a noble spirit in his love of knowledge and in his courage to find the truth while traversing so many intellectuals' mare's nests, and on rare occasions he seems to have shown a touch of tenderness and affection. Nevertheless, he was a bit of a porcupine; his quills were quickly stiffened. Dewey was very different. In background he was very far removed from Sidney Hook; he was already a very famous man when Sidney Hook became his student, so that the distance between himself and the young high school teacher—as Hook was until his appointment as an instructor at New York University—was very large. This did not prevent him from appreciating Hook's intellectual power and his desire to introduce the philosophical method into discussions of public policy. He also never disapproved of Hook's political activities; he saw that Hook was attempting to bring philosophical discipline into political discussions rather than infusing his politics into his philosophy. Hook did not try to make Dewey into a Marxist; he tried rather, in his *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, to introduce or discover a fundamental Deweyan instrumentalism in the thought of Karl Marx.

V

The academic world as it was during Sidney Hook's youth and his early career as a university teacher was a world apart from journalism and polemical politics. Academics did not expect their subjects to attract popular attention or to be of interest to persons who had never studied them. Although the publicity of academics outside the university was less common than it is now, within the university there was less specialization. An academic was expected to look beyond his own specialization onto his entire discipline. The subdivision of each discipline into a number of specialized branches, each with a very large body of literature and each having little in common with any other, had not yet come to prevail. The literature of each discipline was sufficiently small in amount so that a diligent reader of "the literature" could study the main classics and contemporary writings in his field; such a reader could keep up critically with much of the contemporary body of publications.

Sidney Hook was interested in the traditional problems of philosophy into which he had been well initiated at City College. When Sidney Hook studied philosophy it was a subject only for persons who had undergone a strenuous and demanding intellectual training; it had not yet been transformed into a subject for academic autodidacts and dilettantes. Philosophy in the time in which

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Sidney Hook studied and first began to teach was a "*strenge Wissenschaft.*" It was not mixed up with political polemics or literary criticism. It was a subject that could be studied without direct reference to contemporary politics.

The ensuing decade saw a marked departure from this broad and earnest academic isolation. Morris Cohen was interested in public affairs, and he wrote for journals other than academic ones, but he regarded philosophy as apart from the marketplace and the political forum. The philosophy of John Dewey to which Sidney Hook became attached was, in principle, one that denied the validity of the boundary between philosophy and practical affairs. In the five and a half decades since Sidney Hook entered on an academic career, universities have ceased to be as self-contained as they had been; politics, especially the kinds of politics that interest intellectuals, have become more florid in universities. Sidney Hook has courageously resisted the politicization of teaching in universities, although he certainly accepted the notion that problems of political decision should be discussed under the discipline imposed by adherence to philosophical methods. The spirit with which Sidney Hook cultivated philosophy was the same as that in which he conducted his practical political affairs; in both, rational argument and due consideration for evidence were given precedence.

Sidney Hook was an ardent debater about philosophical questions, as he was about political questions; his effort to adhere to the rules that still prevailed in debating philosophical questions when debating political questions was a rare virtue. He was "by nature" a philosopher, seeking clarity of conclusions by lucidity, reason, and evidence in procedure. Sidney Hook's intellectual career has been unceasingly characterized by his self-disciplined practice of clarity, his capacity to exclude sentiments in setting forth his arguments. He thinks that temperament must be adapted to the rules of philosophical argument and not philosophical rules adapted to the exigencies of temperament. Not so much by accidental features of his manners and bearing, but by the main contours of his deportment in intellectual and political affairs, does Sidney Hook belong to the world before the deluge.

If one engages in politics, and particularly if one engages in the politics of intellectuals, which are invariably about large problems and which are often streaked with doctrine, one is bound to be polemical. Sidney Hook has, willy-nilly, been engaged in intellectuals' politics for more than a half century. His engagement has sometimes been organizational, but it has nearly always been polemical. He is probably the greatest polemicist of this century.

Sometimes in political disputes, Sidney Hook has become very vehement, but he has never departed from rationality in argument. To maintain that strict discipline of rationality in political contentions of a sort which have traditionally aroused great anger and savage denunciation is a real moral accomplishment. Sidney Hook has been successful in doing this, and it is no minor accomplishment.

VI

Sidney Hook's choice of mentors was an expression of his intellectual character. Morris Cohen, John Dewey, and Bertrand Russell were his three guiding stars. What he learned from them has stayed with him all his life, but he would not have sought them out and he would not have remained faithful to them if he had not seen in them qualities toward which he already had very strong dispositions. I have already referred to the benefits derived from his association with Cohen and Dewey. Russell, who was a famous philosopher from the first decade of the century onward, was a towering figure made even better known by his political and social progressiveness when Hook first studied philosophy. It was not the latter which attracted Hook, and it was certainly not the fact that Russell was a brilliant figure in British upper class and in refined bohemian circles. In Russell, Hook saw a great embodiment of philosophical power. In the course of time, they even became moderately friendly, but what was most important for Hook in his relationship with Russell was the opportunity it afforded him to discuss philosophical problems unrelentingly and unremittingly. "We talked mostly philosophy and some politics and I drew him out on the philosophers of the past

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whom he had known, questioning him on details of articles he had written. . . . It was intellectually the most exciting year I had ever experienced."

There was never a period in Sidney Hook's life when his philosophical passion was in abeyance. It speaks in the favor of Morris Cohen, John Dewey, and Bertrand Russell that each of these men possessed qualities that corresponded to Hook's own dispositions. In Cohen, these were fundamental piety of being and an awareness of the limits of rational thinking with a refusal to accept any beliefs about the world that could not be brought into accord with experience and reason. In John Dewey, there was a similar view, less dyspeptic and more optimistic but also aware that nothing, and least of all our knowledge, has finality. In Russell, there was the sheer compellingness of thinking, and of thinking about the most fundamental problems of thinking. It was not the substance of Russell's philosophical views that Hook admired; it was rather his intellectual virtue. In Russell, Hook, alien to almost everything else in and about Russell, found a powerful and disinterested philosophical intelligence at work. It was Hook's own enjoyment of philosophizing that found its gratifying counterpart in Russell.

In all of these three philosophers, Sidney Hook saw a devotion to philosophy not as a profession but as the proper exercise of the mind and as a means of finding truth. Despite Marxism and instrumentalism, he writes, "I had a much more traditional view of philosophy as an autonomous discipline concerned with perennial problems whose solution was the goal of philosophical enquiry and knowledge." He was always convinced of the dignity of philosophy as an autonomous activity with its own proper criteria of truth. His espousal of a Deweyan position as a Marxist was a result of this; his acceptance of Marxism was always limited by that conviction. It was this that kept Sidney Hook committed to reason as well as to experience, in contradiction to his Deweyan instrumentalism.

VII

Would Sidney Hook not have done better to have devoted himself to scholarship and philosophical reflection than to the very exhausting marginal political activities in which he participated, such as the formation of the League of Professional Groups, the American Workers' Party, the Committee for Cultural Freedom, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials, the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, etc.? Would it not have been better had he been less preoccupied with the ideas of Karl Marx, if he had been less preoccupied with communism and socialism, if he had engaged in fewer polemics against communist theorists of poor quality, if he had not spent the time he did in organizing the League of Professionals for Foster and Ford, etc.? Was it not all a waste of the time and energy of a man of a very rare acuity of mind and a no less rare moral and intellectual integrity? Would it not have been a gain for Sidney Hook's learning and achievements as a philosopher had he refrained from such busy polemical activity and concentrated instead on writing philosophical works? No definitive answer is possible.

But if one asks whether American public life would have been different had Sidney Hook not participated at its margins for so long, to that question one can give an answer. The answer is that it would have been different and worse had Sidney Hook not done what he did.

At one point in his autobiography, Sidney Hook makes the very penetrating observation that, in the course of his lifetime, what had once been peripheral in American intellectual and public life moved toward the center. What was once an aesthetic, revolutionary bohemianism became a widespread mode of thought and life throughout much of American society. There have been many accounts written about this change. Sidney Hook's careful depiction of what he himself saw and heard over the wide field into which this penetration has occurred is more convincing than any industrious archival research could be.

No one has a more precise and fuller stock of knowledge of the activities of communists and fellow travelers in New York in the 1930s and 1940s. The recent efforts to transfigure the communists of that period (on the part, for example, of such writers as Vivian Gornick and Ellen Schrecker) might be more persuasive without the publication of Sidney Hook's

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vivid accounts about how the communists acted in the League for Peace and Democracy, the League against War and Fascism, the American Committee for Freedom and Democracy, the New York College Teachers' Union, the Committee of 400, and others. Sidney Hook is an unimpugnable witness to how the communists and the fellow travelers conducted themselves over several decades. No painstaking doctoral candidate writing years after the events, without intimate experience and the perspective that direct knowledge of the persons, times, and places offers can ever replace Sidney Hook's keen observations, made in the course of his unceasing engagements and recollected so sharply.

Nevertheless, I keep coming back to the question as to whether Sidney Hook did not misuse his exceptional moral and intellectual qualities by becoming so active in polemics and organizations that have passed away and are now scarcely remembered. After all, it may be said, the communists are now a negligible force. The Communist party in the United States is all but forgotten; the Party is negligible in Great Britain and in Western Germany; it is of small importance in Spain; and it is shrinking in size and influence in France and Italy. Furthermore, so runs the argument, intellectuals no longer care about the Soviet Union; they do not regard it as the hope of mankind, the center of the universe. One part of the argument is correct; the communist parties themselves are weak and no longer a danger to liberal democracies. It is also true that, thanks to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Raymond Aron, and Sidney Hook and to the unsuppressible information about the Soviet Union, it, too, is no longer cited as being an ideal by which all other societies are to be measured and alongside of which they come off poorly.

Would Sidney Hook not have been better off if he had spent more of his life in a quiet room writing the philosophical essays and treatises that he was capable of writing? But, then, when I recall that it was Sidney Hook's polemics and organizational work that helped to bring to a halt the stampede of deception and self-deception, I am not so ready to regret the way in which he spent his time. Had Sidney Hook not engaged with communists at firsthand, first with tentative sympathy and then with deeper understanding, which grew from those experiences and his observations and studies, he would not have become the instructor of a generation which has at least to some extent turned the tide of communist mean-spiritedness and duplicity.

There is a close resemblance between Sidney Hook and Raymond Aron. Both of them—men of the same high degree of unimpeachable honesty and courage, of similarly great intelligence—had parallel lives in this respect. Aron for about thirty-five years attended steadily to the flow of events in French political and intellectual life, writing steadily and critically about them, and never ceasing from speaking out courageously, however unpopular and however isolated he became. In the end he triumphed. The inane Marxist and Leninist fever of the French intellectuals has been broken and much of the credit—which Aron, with a modesty no less than Hook's, disclaimed—must go to him for this change in intellectual temper. Hook, in an atmosphere no less tempestuous than that in Paris and for a longer period, has kept at the same task. The re-establishment—to the extent that it has been re-established—of a more traditional, genuinely liberal liberalism in the United States is a considerable achievement, some of the credit of which must go to Sidney Hook. The Stalinist communism against which Hook contended for three decades no longer has many supporters. Many developments contributed to this; Hook's inexhaustible alertness, courage, and his indefatigable rationality in argument were indispensable to this change of direction.

Raymond Aron in the last years of his life seemed to be uncertain whether he had done the right thing in giving so much of his intellectual energy to the analysis of transient phenomena. Sidney Hook must have asked himself a similar question when he intended, on retirement, to write works of technical philosophy, including a comprehensive and systematic analysis of John Dewey's ideas. I have sometimes asked myself about Sidney Hook: Would he not have done better to be a professor at the University of Chicago or at Stanford University or Harvard or anywhere outside the agitated intellectual atmosphere of New York City? Now, on thinking further about it, I conclude that in this respect all has been for the best in this most problematical of all possible worlds. If it were not for the

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courageous and steadfast action of such men as Aron and Hook in response to passing events which accumulated into a powerful movement, that movement would not have been brought to subsidence.

Furthermore, the movement against which Aron and Hook set themselves has still not been entirely dissipated. The fantasy of the Soviet Union as the ideal society has permeated deeply into the minds of the intellectuals and those who have been instructed or guided by them. The fundamental image of the Soviet Union is deeper than the factual knowledge of its shortcomings. There are still many Western intellectuals to whom the really decisive feature of the ideal society is the absence of "private property in the means of production." It is the fact that the Soviet Union is not a capitalistic society that is important. Freedom, justice, the rule of law, material well-being, civility, democracy—all of these things, as far as some intellectuals are concerned, are less important, some of them much less important, than the abolition of the stratum of private businessmen. The abolition of private property in the means of production is primary. And that is what the Soviet Union has done. That is what redeems it.

There also remains a dislike of democracy among many intellectuals. They have in most cases accommodated themselves to its existence, since it has become part of the tradition of the war against capitalistic society. At heart, however, there are many to whom the idea of the *vox populi, vox dei* is a confirmation of the appropriateness of atheism. That is why they are so ambivalent toward authority; they dislike authority in their own societies, and they adore its concentration in foreign societies which have abolished private industrial and commercial property. For such intellectuals, socialism—or communism—is not a means of realizing greater justice and greater material well-being and greater opportunity for all citizens to enjoy the benefits made possible by a productive economy. It is the concentration of power abroad that they worship.

Sidney Hook is not one of these intellectuals. He has spent the best years of his life not in the enjoyment of the exercise of his philosophical power and in dialogue with others with the same propensity; he has instead tried to enlighten intellectuals, arguing rationally against those intellectuals who were deceived by others who worshiped power in a society which was not their own.

Sidney Hook is a liberal-democrat, a patriot, and a socialist, and he regarded the quest for truth as the highest good. He has set himself to limit the sway of those who dislike democracy, the freedom of the individual, and their own society and who do not care for truth if it does not serve the purposes of an anti-capitalistic tyranny. To preserve liberal democracy and to advance material well-being and the quest for truth, Sidney Hook has never been willing to share the views of the intellectuals who give precedence to the abolition of capitalism and the concentration of power above all else. Such intellectuals remain very numerous. As long as they are numerous enough to be influential, polemical activities like Sidney Hook's remain as necessary as they ever were. They are of enduring value as long as bourgeois liberal democracy is at stake. That is why Sidney Hook's life has been well spent, and that is why his record of his life remains exemplary. May it encourage others to walk in his footsteps.

Sargent Major

JOHN SINGER SARGENT: HIS PORTRAIT. *By Stanley Olson. St. Martin's. $16.95.*

Reviewed by MARY LAGO

In one of his conversations in Ebury Street, George Moore describes an apocalyptic vision of a future director of the National Gallery, who stands dismayed and demoralized as vans roll up to the steps to unload bequests of Sargent portraits. Moore's quip seems good-natured enough until neutralized by another: Sargent was not really an artist, but "a prince of the atelier"—a studio star certain to glow less brightly when removed to the larger sphere of the art world outside. The unkind implication matches much criticism of Sargent's work throughout his career. His technique sparkles, but where is the soul of the

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picture? American ancestry and expatriate upbringing apparently gave him independence and assurance, but where does he *belong*? Is he to be judged by his portrait paintings, and if so, are they more than period pieces, a record of the Last Garden Party before the First World War?

Ambivalences permeate attempts to find satisfying answers to those questions. In 1964, exactly forty years after Moore published *Conversations in Ebury Street*, the critic John Simon, reviewing the exhibition then at the Corcoran Gallery, recalled how, at the age of sixteen, in the Art Institute of Chicago between trains, he had found Sargent's 1890s portrait of the Hon. Mrs. Swinton the glorious and "effulgent" embodiment of everything lovely, her "border smile" and the sweep of her white satin gown the intimations of both worldly mystery and a ravishing ideal. At eighteen, Simon as a Harvard student was appalled at having to pass daily Sargent's works above the Widener Library stair-landings, "a truly ghastly pair of allegorical murals having to do with the First World War and ranking high among its bloodless disasters. . . . It was a shock to find that these unfortunately permanent giant postcards were the work of that same Sargent, and there and then I had one of my earliest experiences of wrenching ambivalence."

Learning to live with that ambivalence has always figured in appraisals of Sargent's work, and nowhere more markedly than in connection with major exhibitions since his death in 1925. Evaluating the Memorial Exhibition of 1926 was like trying to look into a mirror with one's nose pressed against the glass. It was too close for a true perspective, and most of the reviewers had nothing new to say. With his death, however, the well-worn judgments had taken on an unpleasant finality. There were over six hundred works in that exhibition alone; an overwhelming output, William McCance wrote in the *Spectator*, but consistent with Sargent's view of himself as a "chronicler" capable of a "rapid and spontaneous response"—a *mere* chronicler was the implication. Howard Hannay, in the *London Mercury*, pronounced him not essentially a portrait painter, but "a compromise between Gainsborough and the impressionists," and "his range of interest was narrow."

Roger Fry, in the *Nation*, pronounced the judgment that almost invariably comes uppermost. Its tone is scornful and dismissive. Some early work, Fry said, had shown great promise, but by the end of the 1880s Sargent's quick hand and eye were producing imagery without "esthetic scruples." That was why he produced so much, but nothing in his pictures penetrated the surface. Fry wrote:

> We must abandon then this futile search for esthetic values in Sargent's work—a search into which the misleading use of the word artist has led us. . . . Let us consider what it is that he does afford us. We must look at these pictures not as works of art . . . but as illustrations or reports about other things. . . .
>
> Why have we no word for a reporter in painted images? How willingly would I have greeted Sargent as a past master in that craft! As it is, I seem to have been all my life pursuing him with disobliging remarks.

Sargent was a nice, a generous man, but only "striking and undistinguished as an illustrator and non-existent as an artist."

Because Fry's comments have had prolonged influence, it seems fair to wonder whether in 1926 he retained, however unconsciously, a residue of resentment from his unhappy and abortive association from 1904 to 1910 with the Metropolitan Museum and J. P. Morgan, another American whose name, like Sargent's, conjures up visions of heaps of money bags. There were other causes of animosity. In 1894 he had cast his lot with the Royal Academy instead of with the New English Art Club, Fry's base of operations and the principal disseminator of French influence in London art circles. Then in 1910 Sargent had declined to join supporters of Fry's important Postimpressionist exhibition. In a letter from Fry to the *Nation* defending it, Sargent's name read as among the supporters. Sargent, defending himself, replied that he was no such thing and, except for works of Monet and Cézanne, was "absolutely sceptical as to [the others] having any claim whatever to being works of art." In 1957 Quentin Bell would reject C. M. Mount's statement that Fry continued to hound Sargent out of "personal hatred." An errant comma in Fry's letter had done the damage, Bell wrote; it indeed read as if Sargent were a supporter, whereas his name should have been coupled *only* with that of Claude Phillips, who shared his views. Fry had disowned that comma,

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Sargent had made no further objection, and they had more or less gone their separate ways. But the incident did aggravate already intractable differences, the impression of unyielding dislike persisted among the critics, and Fry's verdict on the 1926 exhibition seemed to have become a sentence of depreciation.

Depreciation of prices and reputation did ensue, but by the mid-1950s the interval of neglect seemed to be ending. Doubts about Sargent's standing were expressed less rancorously, and the American motif became a major theme. Sargent, Whistler, and Mary Cassatt shared an American exhibition in 1954. Reviews had such titles as "Expatriates' Return," "Famous Americans in Exile," "Sophisticates and Innocents Abroad." It was as if, in the Korean War decade, Americans had realized that it was time to point with pride to an American who had declined a British knighthood because he had, on principle, clung to his American citizenship. In 1956 came the centenary exhibition, "Sargent's Boston," at the Museum of Fine Arts, one site of his ambitious Boston murals. A number of American reviewers frankly acknowledged ambivalences about Sargent's work. Fairfield Porter, in *Art News*, summed them up as "Sargent: An American Problem." In London the *Times*'s critic, with a rancor now increasingly rare, called him a "diabolical portrait painter" who, although claiming to be a chronicler and not a judge, "while clothing his sitters in the outward trappings of splendour, in fact revealing the cloven feet—both male and female—that they sometimes sought to mask by the very glory of their visible apparel." But other British commentators were more generous: Denys Sutton, for instance, recommending in the *Burlington Magazine* that readers study Sargent's portraits as a key to "the particular flavour of American, and especially Bostonian, culture at the close of the last century. . . . He had the knack of implying that combination of wealth and refinement that characterised so many of the leaders of the social scene, and his cosmopolitanism made him at home in London, Paris, and Boston."

Perhaps some of the ambivalences about Sargent were national as well as aesthetic in origin. Had his being American, his conspicuous, unapologetic energy and industry, his near monopoly of the fashionable-portrait market caused vague Edwardian resentment at a time when vivacious American women were capturing more than their share of eligible English titles and fortunes? It was fashionable to assume that Americans were vulgar, pushy, and uneducated—amiable, perhaps, like Abimalech V. Oover in Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*, but fundamentally uncultured. Sargent was neither vulgar nor uncultured, and he certainly was not pushy; he was in fact painfully modest and self-effacing. But he became connected in the public mind with an English class whose hedonism and heedlessness, while the world slid toward war, now seemed reprehensible. Only relatively recently have the late Victorian-Edwardian years become a period worthy of study in their own right: neither the tag end of Victorianism nor the uncertain beginnings of the "modern." Perspectives of passing time have made reassessments of both the Edwardians and Sargent much easier.

As a result, Sargent's work gains in historical (and monetary) value. The 1964 Birmingham exhibition was the first major Sargent show in Great Britain since 1926. It came to Washington as "Sargent's Private World." Its theme was Sargent as Edwardian. He was now one of the last true exponents of the Grand Manner and of a vanished age. Did the tenseness often discerned in his sitters result from his view of them (but it was not called "diabolical"), or did it reflect their own relation to that age? "Maybe," John Simon concluded his review, "the unconvincing frilliness, passivity, slightly melancholy smile of many of these figures—of the very objects, almost—constitute Sargent's insight into the age, or the self-recognition of that age itself: of being a period of decline and transition toward something tougher, sounder, more enlightened—but also less fetchingly wistful."

That "period of decline" framed the 1979 exhibition, "John Singer Sargent and the Edwardian Age." It produced a swelling volume of analytical comment and an ingathering of past evaluations: Sargent in relation to contemporary critics, his position as Edwardian American, the Edwardian Age itself as a compendium of social evidence. Now that photography and economics had diminished the importance of the painted portrait, critics seemed to apologize less for Sargent's bravura

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performances. "Painterly virtuosity is John Singer Sargent's chief merit," wrote Frances Spalding in the *Connoisseur*. Fry's unforgiving animosity fell more neatly into place as an episode in the history of aesthetic preferences. Words like *opulent, elegant, dazzling, resplendent* recurred again and again, with overtones indeed wistful in a decade characterized by a determined political and social disarray.

Finally, 1986 brought the Whitney Museum's Sargent retrospective, called simply "John Singer Sargent": neither a memorial nor a centenary, presenting a Sargent neither exclusively Bostonian nor Edwardian, but Sargent in the round, with contributory influences, private and public, historical and social. Simultaneous with its appropriately resplendent catalogue volume comes Stanley Olson's biography, the third full-length study of Sargent, and the most detailed. It benefits from both the longer perspective and access to the Ormond family papers, owned by descendants of Sargent's sister Violet. Evan Charteris's biography, published in 1927, enjoyed the advantage of its author's friendship with Sargent. It published a number of his letters, which give a pleasant impression of his energy and geniality. Inevitably, it lacks the longer historical perspective, but it is attractive for its modesty. Charteris tells what he knows and tells it gracefully and straightforwardly. His book is valuable, moreover, for quotations from some primary materials of great interest to art historians: for example, Sargent's reasons for admiring Monet, and their respective definitions of Impressionism. C. M. Mount's biography first appeared in 1955. He wrote it, he stated, out of gratitude to Sargent, whom he never knew but whom he took as his model when as a student he intended to make portraiture his profession. Of those two studies, Mount's is the less convincing. He tries rather ostentatiously to establish himself as an insider: he acknowledges assistance from Violet Ormond, "with whom I spent evenings plunged into a world known only to the two of us." Contrariwise, he indulges in a great many suppositions and speculations; the incidence of authorial qualifiers—"doubtless," "perhaps," "appears to be," "must have been"—is very high. His diction tends to become stilted: "The careful finish of French letters made strong call on his appreciative faculties. . . ." Olson speaks kindly of both books, but it is Charteris on whom he draws frequently; Mount he quotes not at all.

Olson is not a painter and did not know Sargent, but as an American expatriate settled in London he understands the transatlantic experience. He belongs to a new and more demanding generation of biographer. Meticulous but unobtrusive documentation testifies to his thoroughness. He is careful not to overstep his limits: Sargent and Monet on Impressionism he calls "a hornets' nest much better dealt with by art historians." His signal contribution is the wealth of biographical evidence assembled and used to establish and amplify, confirm or correct the facts of Sargent's life. For instance, Mount glorifies Mary Hunter as the person who "alone was the confidante of his heart." Olson dismisses that as "an overworked turn" and places that friendship in the context of Sargent's devotion to his semi-invalid sister Emily, who really was that "confidante of his heart." Emily now emerges as an individual of character and the source of much of Sargent's strength. Olson's metaphors are sometimes excessively flamboyant, and one might question as too comprehensive his judgment of Sargent's Boston murals as a "disastrous turning" in his career, but we now have a view of Sargent more fully rounded than any previous one, as well as a series of detailed and intriguing group portraits of his family, friends, and associates.

Olson's narrative moves briskly, appropriate to a career that progressed with notable briskness. Staccato sentences sometimes suggest Sargent's own mannerisms. Describing frustrations with early stages of the notorious portrait of Madame Gautreau, Olson writes: "Essentials seemed to elude him. He had trouble finding a satisfactory pose. He had difficulty with colour. The sittings were endless. His subject lost patience. He suffered uncharacteristic doubts. He had never known so many problems. When the portrait was eventually shown he fought with the sitter's mother." There is not only the frustration of entrapment inside a situation that for too long resisted solution, but also a suggestion of Sargent's mannerism of darting repeatedly at the easel from across the studio to apply a dot or a dab of paint. In fact, the apparently melodramatic studio behavior was quite

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unself-conscious. He was meticulously conscientious. "He always stuck to the job at hand. He was strict about his appointments, loathed altering them, and positively dreaded the possibility of forgetting one. The language of self-importance was unknown to him." At the height of his career, he had "the cool professional bearing of a very professional Harley Street consultant, designed to inspire confidence."

How complete was the inner confidence is less certain. Away from the easel and among strangers, Sargent was nearly inarticulate and strung words together "on a rope of 'er-er-er-er', and delivered with a slowness that implied an almost physical activity involved in pushing the sounds around"—curious in a person of such consummate poise. Olson makes no excuses for never quite reaching the core of Sargent's psychological composition—perhaps no one ever will, for it seems to have been exceptionally well guarded. Perhaps there *was* no inner core, and that composition was as literal as some critics accused his portraits of being. Olson does, however, explain how some of the puzzles of Sargent's personality might have come to pass.

Most accounts state simply that Sargent's parents lived abroad, that he was born in Florence and began art study there, then moved seasonally about Europe with his parents and sisters until he was eighteen, when he arrived at the Carolus-Duran atelier in Paris. Olson follows the Sargents about Europe during those years of John's "Baedeker education," during all of which his mother resisted returning to the life of a conventional Philadelphia matron. A European tour thus became lifelong European residence for herself, her physician husband, and their family. Just when the account of their wanderings makes the reader feel that he too is being dragged from spa to spa, Olson deposits John in Paris, where the choice of Carolus-Duran as teacher was entirely fortuitous. But his active life really began with that release from the family cocoon, with regular instruction and daily association for the first time with companions his own age, Americans molded by America itself. However, "he was not like the people around him." He had been imprinted for life with habits of loneliness and family insularity. Jovial in accustomed company, at ease in foreign settings, he was in essence a solitary, enclosed personality whom no one, except perhaps Emily, really knew.

Thus no entangling alliances outside the family kept him in France. Olson corrects the idea that Sargent bolted to England to escape the scandal over the portrait of Madame Gautreau, or that Henry James pressured him into the move. Before he left Paris, and before he met James, he had a commission from an English industrialist family, the Vickers. Their portraits, which mark "a turning-point," were again fortuitous, the result of a collapsed Spanish holiday, the autumn break in the English weather, and the necessity for working indoors, so that he went on painting family members. The Vickers were "a new *type* of sitter." Sargent's complex and solitary internal world was perhaps the best possible equipment for the painter who would become forever associated with the most conspicuously representative type of Edwardian England. More than his virtuosity, his chronicler's eye, neither French nor native English nor yet stereotypically American, may have inspired sitters to trust themselves to him more willingly for likenesses they certainly hoped would eternally exemplify wealth, refinement, and power. Sargent's painting exactly what he saw has unintentionally helped history to turn the tables, converting them into splendid period pieces, irreplaceable as a key to our past. To repeat Roger Fry, "Let us consider what it is that he does afford us."

The Abuses of Hindsight

THINKING IN TIME: THE USES OF HISTORY FOR DECISION-MAKERS. *By Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May. Free Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by HAROLD ORLANS

"If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us! But passion and party blind our eyes, and the light which experi-

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ence gives is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us!" Coleridge thus saw the uses of history as a guide to action more clearly than Richard Neustadt and Ernest May.

Thinking in Time derives from a course, Uses of History, that the authors have for many years taught jointly at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. It elaborates arguments and illustrations earlier presented in Ernest May's 1973 *"Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy.*

Every good course does not make a good book. In a seminar, the authors' shrewdness, modesty, and wit can temper and relieve passages that, in print, appear painfully didactic. The book seeks to achieve the unachievable, to systematize the disorder of history, and to abstract from the colossal, expanding record of recent events rules by which public officials can govern better and more safely. It might be subtitled "Mini-Methods for Avoiding Calamity."

It is puzzling how two distinguished scholars—there is no more perceptive student of the presidency than Richard Neustadt—can have gotten themselves into this foolish fix. An effort to correct the ahistorical outlook of many officials and policy analysts by demonstrating the current force of historical factors would be entirely laudable. But to draw from selectively composed historical events some guidelines for managing the future is to commit the same intellectual crime as the social and policy "scientists" who offer simple solutions to complex problems.

The book's purpose—honestly!—is to present "workable procedures to get more history used better on the job by busy people preoccupied with daily decisions and other aspects of management." History is defined as "any happenings of record down to and including today's headlines." In fact, the authors ignore more than 99.99 percent of history, confining themselves mainly to a few aspects of a few episodes involving American presidents and senior officials from the administration of Franklin Roosevelt to that of Ronald Reagan. The episodes, summarized succinctly and with insight, include: Labor Secretary Frances Perkins's failure to eliminate the Women's Bureau in 1933; Roosevelt's success in gaining passage of the Social Security Act of 1935; Truman's response to the 1950 invasion of South Korea; Kennedy's involvement in the Bay of Pigs landing, the Cuban missile crisis, and the cancellation of the Skybolt missile; Johnson's escalation of the U.S. military engagement in Vietnam; Ford's action to free the Mayaguez freighter and crew from Cambodian hands; the aborted mass inoculation against a feared swine flu epidemic in 1976; the failure of Carter's 1977 proposal for deep cuts in American and Russian strategic nuclear weapons; the 1979 flap about the Soviet brigade in Cuba; and the successful social security reform of 1983.

In their analytic sketches of these episodes, the authors review the main facts, issues, historical analogies, alternative courses of action, and advice presented to the president or other "decision-maker"; the decision he made and its consequences; and how, by questioning the analogies and advice, he might have made a better decision. If they like his decision, they commend his method of reaching it. That this approach assigns more importance than is warranted to the historical analogies and methods of decision employed needs hardly be said.

The authors' sketches, always perceptive and sometimes quite masterful, reflect intelligence honed by personal experience, study, discussion, and trenchant hindsight. "Of course we use hindsight. What else?" The answer is: any and all facts that were known or thought or felt or happened at the time. *That* is history. Their hindsight is political moralizing disguised as analysis, and, indeed, their work is full of "should" and "would" and "might." It misses the true sense of events as they are lived: the sense of uncertainty about what will happen and about exactly what has happened and is happening elsewhere as one must nonetheless act.

McGeorge Bundy (who teaches history himself), the authors say, should not (in a July 1965 memo to President Lyndon Johnson) have contrasted the U.S. position in Vietnam with that of the French in 1954 (when there *was* a contrast), but compared it with the French in 1951 (when there were more parallels, which anyone can now see were foreboding). Truman (who read a great deal of history)

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should not (in June 1950) have contrasted the U.S. action in Korea with the Allies' inaction in Manchuria, Ethiopia, or Austria, but made a more farfetched comparison with the 1948 airlift to maintain West Berlin, and, hence, later stopped General MacArthur at the 38th parallel. Kennedy should not have approved the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Ford should not have approved the swine flu inoculations, and Carter should not have sought to emulate FDR's first hundred days, since he was not FDR and had not won by a landslide during a great depression.

It would be discouraging to learn that all the foregoing errors had been endorsed at the time, as some certainly were, by historians with proper credentials. The authors' unbelievable test of these credentials is that the historian "is based in a reputable college or university [they do not identify any disreputable ones—or do they mean to exclude journalists and government historians?], . . . had graduate training in research and that . . . [his] results have gone through some form of peer review." The work of Thucydides, Ulysses Grant, Churchill, and Harold Nicolson, which they praise, meets none of these criteria. But, then, they distinguish great history, which is to be *read,* from that which is merely *used*—that is, scanned for answers to questions upon which the fate of nations rests. "The clearer these questions are in your mind, the faster your fingers can flip through even the most massive fine-print tome. It isn't hard, and it gets easier with practice." The hard thing is to foresee all of the questions that will later be asked.

The authors praise George Marshall and Franklin Roosevelt for their astute use of history. Marshall apparently read much "cheap fiction" and some history; Raymond Moley writes that Roosevelt "never . . . read a serious book" and Arthur Krock, that he had a "shallow grounding in history." Evidently the faculty of "thinking in time"—defined as "imagining the future as it may be when it becomes the past"—need not rest on, and does not necessarily follow from, reading much history. As examples of that faculty, they cite the success of the Marshall Plan and the enduring social security system that Roosevelt established, and contrast the latter with Lyndon Johnson's social programs, some of which (like some of Roosevelt's they do *not* mention) "have not survived."

Someone said that Roosevelt had a second-class mind and first-class temperament; many attest to Marshall's admirable character and integrity. I think the authors, searching for a clue to history that they cannot find because it is not there, have mistaken character and political judgment for a mode of thought. They have one consistent theme: presidents and other officials should avoid historical failures and achieve historical successes, and they will show them how to improve their chances of doing so.

Despite their strange assumption that history, that bottomless bog into which all that was human sinks, is a tool their readers can learn to use, the authors are modest. They do not guarantee success and express brief reservations about all of their advice. They claim only that, with their "mini-methods," a busy executive can do "a bit better . . . in a short time": "We would be happy to see a batting average go up from .250 to .265." They do not say how this average is computed; how (without a trip to the future) we can identify performance with and without the "correct" use of history; or what is the value of a .500 batting average if the strikeouts include a disastrous riot, war, or depression.

What are the "mini-methods," italicized at least three dozen times, that can help presidents steer the nation more safely through the white waters of history? Take any international or domestic episode. List what is "known," "presumed," and "unclear" about it and what is "similar to" and "different from" it in one or more earlier episodes with which it is being compared. Use a small pad, as presidents have time for only a pinch of history. Then ask a string of questions, some embarrassingly vague or childish. "Don't ask 'What's the problem,' ask 'What's the story?' " Ask "When," "What," "Who," "How," "Why." "Plot . . . relevant trends" and "any changes in specifics that appear to have especially high political significance." "Articulate objectives and options. . . ." Ask your expert advisers for the odds that their key "presumption" is right. "Place" each actor in his distinctive biographical and historical context and identify earlier incidents of special importance to him. Identify the distinctive history and operating features of each key organization, etc.

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Merely to ask these questions, the poor president will need more time than the authors allot for the answers—he'll "glance at papers in the limousine, thumb them while someone is talking. . . . If you do get [his] attention, you can't keep it"—and he must ask them repeatedly, as an issue develops, and ask them of every issue he encounters; issues engulf the president; they are not nicely isolated as in this book.

The authors say nothing about who is to provide the answers. One man cannot know enough; two or more may disagree. Is the truth then determined by ballot, by the man whom the president trusts most, or by political considerations?

The Bundy memo that the authors criticize was apparently written by a junior staff member and not taken seriously; the Vietnam advice of Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Under Secretary of State George Ball, which they like, was also dismissed. How nearsighted were Bundy and President Johnson not to see what we all know now.

"We can promise to be good, but we cannot promise to be clever," Keynes once said. The authors hope to make all dutiful officials .015 percentage points more clever. If the officials are political opponents, that will cancel any gain. Should we pray that the Russians do, or do not, translate this book?

The authors ignore most of human history: all that is unrecorded, unknown, or ambiguous, the changes that come from imperceptible processes like aging, the history so consummately rendered in *War and Peace*. They ignore all history that cannot be managed, all that is spontaneous and precarious, subject to inspiration and will, accident and chance, the history that left Churchill senile and cut Kennedy down in his stride.

The recent events on which they dwell were once outside the pale of academic history, because primary sources were not accessible, surviving participants could readily correct accounts based on secondary sources, and interviews and recollections (i.e., hindsight) were perilous evidence. These obstacles cannot be overcome by cleverness. The historians' march into the present, competing for employment with journalists and social scientists, has not raised the quality of their scholarship. Useful truths can be shoddy.

Thinking in Time is vain thinking, because, as T. E. Lawrence remarks, "All generalisations or inferences are vain, unless they are drawn from the full body of evidence: and the full body of history is too full for our finity. Not to mention that the full body infers and deduces nothing."

Flash Dancer

TRAVELS IN HYPERREALITY: ESSAYS. *By Umberto Eco. Edited and translated by William Weaver. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. $15.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN SIMON

The intellectuals I met on a recent trip to Italy were still wondering why Umberto Eco's novel, *The Name of the Rose*, was such an enormous hit in the United States, the world, and, more important yet, Italy. Before I had a chance to reply, they were already plying me with their own answers. I heard about how Eco and a bunch of like-minded *littérateurs*, Grupo 63, had put an end to the novel with a plot, and then, when the hunger for a good, old-fashioned story became overwhelming, that so-and-so Eco (some said) jumped right in and supplied one. Eco is a great publicist (others said) and knows the right book reviewers, editors, professors all over the world, which paid off. Readers don't want to be entertained any more (one cynic commented); they want to be elevated by boredom.

Needless to say, I wouldn't have got my two centesimi in, even if centesimi still existed (though, I gather, they may be resurrected), but soon I was to be frustrated even more. The editor of this journal had asked me for a piece explaining the worldwide success of *The Name of the Rose*, but by the time I finally got around to this, it seemed best to do it in the context of a review of Eco's latest American publication, *Travels in Hyperreality*. By the

JOHN SIMON, drama and film critic, is the author of *Something to Declare: Twelve Years of Films from Abroad*, *Reverse Angle: A Decade of American Films*, and *Paradigms Lost: Reflections on Literacy and Its Decline*.

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time I got started on that, the *New York Times Book Review* of June 1, 1986, came out with an article by Anthony Burgess on best-sellers in which he explains Eco's triumph as follows:

> Clearly, a mass audience was looking for something other than titillation. The book offered exotic escape, but one could imagine more alluring bolt-holes than an ascetic all-male community. What it offered more abundantly was information. Mr. Eco instructed the reader exhaustively on the life of medieval monks, but he made the way in easy by contriving a cunning anachronism. His William of Baskerville is a Sherlock Holmes transported to the past, and his Conan Doyle provenance was spelled out in his very name.

Burgess's thesis in the article is unimpeachable, albeit fairly obvious. It is that people want to read trash but also want to feel they're being instructed and educated while doing so, which is why they will read a trashy novel by James Michener that they believe (correctly) gives them a lot of Texas history. Or else, as Burgess demonstrates from the example of *Lolita*, they will read high literature as long as they can mistake it for pornography. I myself always thought that for a book to have a great immediate success, it has to be either something low, posing as something high, or something high, passing for low. Thus a Graham Greene or Leonardo Sciascia novel with higher aspirations makes it on looking like a thriller, and a piece of trash by Andrew Greeley or Chaim Potok makes it by passing itself off as a work of religious or theological significance.

But none of this answers why *The Name of the Rose* should make it rather than some other work of a similar sort, and if *Rose*, why so ecumenically as to have made its author a rich man. In his disingenuous little *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, Eco purports to be puzzled by his novelistic success and tries to figure it out. This book, modeled in its specious ex post facto explanations on Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition," is, if anything, even more manipulative than *The Name of the Rose*, but as a piece of highfalutin double-talk it is a masterpiece of sorts. Take such a statement as the tentative notion advanced that Adso's, the narrator's, inability to understand anything may have been "one of the

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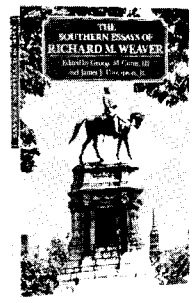

THE SOUTHERN ESSAYS OF RICHARD M. WEAVER

Foreword by George Core
Edited with Preface by George M. Curtis, III and James J. Thompson, Jr.

Richard M. Weaver (1910-1963) was one of the leading figures in the post World War II development of an intellectual, self-conscious conservatism, and his most important and widely cited book, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, 1948), is still in print.

Weaver's appreciation of liberty was rooted in his understanding of Southern history. This collection of fourteen of Weaver's essays on the South and Southern history is presented in demonstration of George Core's point that "few critics of the South rival Richard Weaver in comprehensiveness of vision and depth of thought. . . ."

Among the essays included are "Lee the Philosopher" (1948), "Agrarianism in Exile" (1950), "The Tennessee Agrarians" (1952), "The South and the American Union" (1957), and "Two Types of Individualism" (1963).

George M. Curtis, III is Professor of History at Hanover College and James J. Thompson, Jr., is Book Review Editor of *The New Oxford Review*.

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features that made the novel readable for unsophisticated readers. They identified with the innocence of the narrator, and felt exonerated even when they did not understand everything."

Adso was, in fact, Eco's excuse for writing a sort of *Bildungsroman,* not so much for Adso (as he, like everyone else in the novel, remains a cipher, and there is no way for a cipher to become educated) as for the reader; if, that is, throwing a kind of Baedeker to the Middle Ages pell-mell at the public can be said to be educational. Eco is, albeit unwittingly, more honest when he writes of "a huge amount of material . . . accumulated since 1952, and originally intended for other, still vague, purposes: a history of monsters, or an analysis of medieval encyclopedias, or a theory of lists. . . . At a certain point I said to myself that, since the Middle Ages were my day-to-day fantasy, I might as well write a novel set in that period." I think that theory of lists is the clue: Eco is a born list maker; nothing delights him more (you feel it both in his novel and in the essays of *Travels in Hyperreality*) than making up lists: lists of architectural details, sculptural elements, bibliographical data, patristic and other theological lore, aspects of book illumination, heresies, monsters, holy relics, and on and on. Although the novel has a plot, the characters disappear behind endless lists. The book reads like *Middlemarch,* if it had been written not by George Eliot but by Mr. Casaubon. Was it perhaps Eco's novel that Dante foresaw in his exclamation in *Paradiso,* XXX, 116–17: "Quanta è la larghezza / di questa rosa nell' estreme foglie"?

Yes, the readers must have felt they were getting an education in a period that had not been extensively dealt with in fiction. Egypt, the Bible lands, Greece, Rome, the Renaissance—these have been pretty much covered; not so the Middle Ages. Of course, there have been odd novels about a troubadour or a crusader, about Abélard and Héloïse or the Albigensians, but they did not catch on; they were either too literary or too specific and did not afford a convenient cross section. It took Eco to figure out that a monastery would make a fine equivalent for a Grand Hotel, and that in trotting out monks with various interests and specialities from all over Europe, and by supplying the monastery with a library to parallel that of Alexandria (and meet with a similar fate), one could write the intellectual, artistic, and craft history of the Middle Ages, and, thanks to a couple of tricky plot devices, the political history as well.

Monks, moreover, excite the imagination, or at least its prurient subdivision. One envisions homosexual and heterosexual orgies, not to mention flagellation, the odd burning at the stake, and other pleasant horrors. That the book delivers relatively little of this doesn't matter; the expectations are sufficiently tickled. Religion, furthermore, is in again, and there is, it seems, renewed interest in Latin in our schools. The Latin passages in *The Name of the Rose,* by the way, are illustrative of Eco's shrewdness. They tend to be just easy enough for someone with a modest education to make out the gist; if not, there is usually a translation worked into the text. This raises the question of what language the characters in the novel are speaking anyway. Latin, of course; but then why isn't the entire novel in Italian, which, clearly, stands in for Latin? Why are some passages actually in Latin? Worse yet, why are some passages given in both languages? Obviously because Eco wants to impress the reader with his, Eco's, ability to write Latin and also butter him up with his, the reader's, ability to unscramble most of this Latin.

Then, too, Eco has a reputation as a semiologist, and some unfortunate souls doubtless believed that by reading the novel they could get an easy, fictionalized introduction to the arcane but important (so they had been led to suppose) discipline of semiology. Indeed, reviews of the novel made much of the insight that medieval Christian symbolism had a good deal in common with modern semiotics. But as a semiology primer, alas, *The Name of the Rose* is second in uselessness only to books intended as introductions to semiology.

And, further, *Rose* is a genuine cliff-hanger, or page-turner, full of foreshadowing and crosscutting and all the tried and tricky methods of creating suspense. Yet at the same time it exudes learning from every pore and is a kind of cultural *summa* for the Middle Ages. And, surely, credit is due for the amassing of such prodigious information, even if much of

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it is spewed out in large, unwieldy lumps. It is really essayistic information disguised as fiction, so that it is with relief that one turns to such a volume as the new selection from Eco's short nonfiction of three decades, *Travels in Hyperreality:* the essays here need not pretend to be anything else. They were mostly published as feuilletons in *L'Espresso* and *La Repubblica,* and they are the sort of thing conspicuously lacking from American newspapers.

The pieces in *Travels in Hyperreality* are unequal in value and interest. By far the most rewarding part is the first section, which lends its title to the entire book. (Incidentally, this may be the first book whose title is spelled one way by the publisher and another by the designer. On the jacket—and wherever the jacket's spelling, which is governed by considerations of design, is reproduced—"Hyper Reality" is two words, which is nonsense. Elsewhere, "Hyperreality" is correctly a single word. The day may be at hand when the designer will not content himself with dictating merely the title; give the fellow a finger, and. . . .) In this by far the longest of the essays, Eco is traveling through America in search of manifestations of what he takes to be the two dominant American cravings: the need for "the real thing" and the hunger for "more." He concentrates on a variety of museums, wax museums, millionaires' palaces, fancy hotels, riverboats, game parks, even cemeteries—Disneylands, Marine Worlds, Forest Lawns, and such—especially in California and Florida, where "the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake." The account is primarily of works of art and historical scenes or documents reproduced in various ways so as to make them seem—and in some cases even be—more real than reality. He fans out to cover zoos, television programs with evangelists performing miraculous cures, and life in Los Angeles. Eco's caustic style often scores through poker-faced understatement: "Between San Francisco and Los Angeles I was able to visit seven wax versions of Leonardo's *Last Supper.*" Or: "Los Angeles is . . . a metropolis . . . of seventy-six different cities where alleyways are ten-lane freeways and man considers his right foot a limb designed for pressing the accelerator, and the left an atrophied appendix, because cars no longer have a clutch."

But it isn't all snideness. Eco does recognize that what he calls "the Last Beach ideology"—the American desire to preserve the treasures of European history and art from destruction—has a touching side to it as well as a silly or greedy one, and that, like the American "shrines of the Fake," the European "sanctuaries of the Genuine" with their exclusionism are not above reproach. Eco's targets may be easy, but he dispatches them with admirable brio: "Oral Roberts sees heaven not as the mystic rose but as Marineland. God is a good hippopotamus." Of course, true Dante-saturated Italian that he is, Eco cannot conceive of a Mystic Rose as possibly just as arbitrary and impugnable as a heavenly Marineland. Yet although this liminal section is full of tart descriptions and ironic bull's-eyes, the conclusion is unconvincing—that in this Disneyfied world, "alongside the Good Whale there is the restless, plastic form of the Bad Shark," and that this uncertainty about whether the fake world is heaven or hell keeps the anxious consumer looking for new promises to consume. Would it not seem, though, that on the level of the Absolute Fake, good and evil cease to exist; that it takes a European sensibility trying to outsmart itself to project them onto everything from the San Diego Zoo to the Haunted Mansion, and that continuous consumption stems from a simple voracious appetite rather than from even relatively complex uncertainties?

The next section, "The Return of the Middle Ages," is the only one that remains undated, so that one wonders whether it came out as an advertising adjunct to *The Name of the Rose.* It makes facile parallels between our time and the Middle Ages, and it contains two errors of impressive magnitude. Eco, who fancies himself an expert on America and its popular arts, refers to "Americans [having] succeeded in transforming Rostand's *Chanteclair* [*sic*] into the *Fantastiks* [*sic*]." Anyone who knows anything about either *The Fantasticks* or Rostand must know that it is *Les Romanesques* and not *Chantecler* that is the source of that longest-running musical, which has nothing to do with roosters and barnyards. Worse yet, the great expert on the Middle Ages speaks of Gilles de Rais as "having devoured too many children," whereas

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even such a nonexpert as I am knows that Bluebeard subjected those wretched children to sodomy, torture, and murder, but eating them was not one of his practices.

With similar unreliability, Eco writes, in a later section, of "the geisha with the compressed and atrophied foot," although it takes no polymath like him to know that bound feet existed only in China, never in Japan, unless that singular atrophied foot refers to the left one of a geisha who settled in Los Angeles. Now, if you come on strong as a man of encyclopedic knowledge both high and low, as Eco does, you should not commit such whoppers; it makes the rest of us, with our little patches of scattered information, lose confidence in our latter-day Pico della Mirandola and wonder whether his feet, though perhaps not compressed and atrophied, might not be made of clay.

The third section, "The Gods of the Underworld," concerns various cults of unreason throughout the world. In the first essay, Eco begins with the differences between the Superman comic strip and the later movie version, which he finds more mystical. Characteristically, the essay touches promiscuously on such figures as Tolkien and Feuerbach, Fellini, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. There is some diverting juggling with social and cultural phenomena, particularly because of Eco's ability to be both in the stratosphere, with books like *Forme del sacro in un'epoca di crisi* and *Das Heilige*, and in the quotidian mud of movies and comic strips—simultaneously the Superman and the Clark Kent of the history of ideas. But, as always, the fun is marred by two typical disturbing phenomena. One is the grand but unreliable assertion—for example, that speed reading is "already being taught in the universities." I haven't met with it on any American curriculum and would be very surprised to find it at Eco's own University of Bologna. The other is self-important posturing, as when Eco concludes that "as antidote or antistrophe" to these weird cults (and note, by the way, that "antistrophe" where "antidote" would be quite enough), "the arts of the Trivium, logic, dialectic, rhetoric" might serve, save that "anyone who goes on stubbornly practicing them will be accused of impiety."

That last bit is worth pondering. Are there really practitioners of the Trivium who have been accused of impiety? Is this a hard fact or merely a flourish of rhetoric, without logic or dialectic? Consider the essay in praise of Thomas Aquinas from a later section bearing the Boethian title "De Consolatione Philosophiae"; rather arrogantly, it ends by listing the probable opinions and positions of Saint Thomas were he alive today. Eco knows "for sure" that he would urge us "to learn from him how you can think cleanly, like a man of your own time. After which I wouldn't want to be in his shoes." This sounds like the same dark threat about the Trivium. Does it mean that, because Eco would not want to be in Thomas's shoes, our semiologist prefers *not* to think cleanly? Or is this just another piece of rhetorical jactitation? Rhetoric without logic, however, leads not to the Trivium but to triviality.

There is something unacceptable about Eco's stance, which tries to be populist and elitist at the same time, and, at all times, paradoxical, challenging, too clever by half. "Terrorism," we read, is a much lesser concern than the coming to power of Communists "because it's a biological consequence of the multinationals, just as a day of fever is a reasonable price of an effective vaccine. . . . [The Red Brigades] must recognize that they are acting out a script already written by their presumed enemies"—that is, the capitalists. This piece of piquant sophistry is in dubious taste in an essay about the Moro assassination, but what can we expect from a social philosopher who in an essay "On the Crisis of the Crisis of Reason" wonders, "Is stylistic evidence valid in establishing what is the 'right' meaning of the *Iliad*, or whether Bo Derek is more desirable than Sigourney Weaver"? The point here is not how Eco answers his own question, but how he formulates it: Homer and Hollywood in felicitous juxtaposition. Again, in an essay on the Falkland war, "Chile refuses to fall in line with Argentina. . . . Castro agrees at once. Castro must be more familiar with Errol Flynn than with Marx."

This kind of grandstanding is typical of someone who tries to be a populist and an elitist at the same time. In "The Multiplication of the Media," from the section "Reports on the Global Village," Eco has a paragraph

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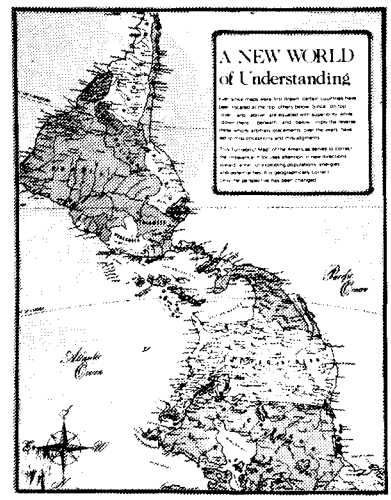
that begins by asserting that Caravaggio is still recognized as better than his imitators, Balzac still acknowledged as superior to "Dallas." To prove that this is not just a matter of technique, he continues: "For example, Wenders's film *Hammett* is technically much more sophisticated than Huston's classic *The Maltese Falcon*, and yet we follow the former only with interest and the latter with religious devotion." Who is this "we"? I enjoy *The Maltese Falcon*, but certainly don't follow it with religious devotion. But then, in a long essay, "Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intellectual Collage," Eco informs us that "*Casablanca* is not a work of art, if such an expression still has a meaning." Here the elitist shades into the populist: What is art, after all? A little later in the essay, however, Eco writes, "The boastful *Rio Bravo* is a cult movie and the great *Stagecoach* is not." Could that mean that "the great *Stagecoach*" is, after all, a work of art? Is our populist shading back into an elitist?

But let us return to that *Maltese Falcon* paragraph, where Eco notes that today's "kids pack into a Palasport, but on the first night it's the Bee Gees and the next it's John Cage or a performer of Satie. . . ." And so on, praising the kids' catholic omnivorousness, to conclude that, without growing better or worse, "things have simply changed, and even value judgments must be formed according to different parameters." There, clearly, is the populist speaking. Yet in a feuilleton on the pop song "Lady Barbara," Eco's conclusion is: "Only when the song has become entirely unpleasant will the audience feel happy at last." In this contempt it is, of course, the elitist who gets the upper hand.

There are pieces in *Travels in Hyperreality* on everything from wearing blue jeans (if Barthes wrote on fashion, can Eco be far behind?) to sports, from the analysis of a news photograph to Marshall McLuhan, on whom Eco isn't keen. Throughout, there are references to the Middle Ages—heralds of, or paralipomena to, *The Name of the Rose*. Always, Eco is best when he is closest to being a reporter, a travel writer, or a teller of anecdotes. So "Whose Side Are the Orixà On?"—conversations in situ with practitioners of Afro-Brazilian rites—and parts of "A Theory of Expositions," on the relative propaganda merit of various exhibits at Montreal's Expo

Corrective perspective



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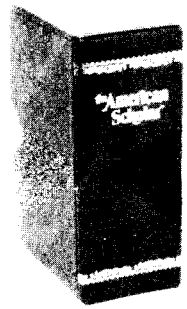

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'67, are much more enjoyable than the windy speculations in "Language, Power, Force," a piece dealing with Barthes, Foucault, and the historians Georges Duby and Michael Howard, where you can read such things as "It isn't clear if Foucault's view of power (which Barthes, with genius, exemplifies in the given language) is a neorevolutionary view or a neoreformist one. Except that Foucault's merit would lie in having abolished the difference between the two concepts. . . ." Ah, well, an abolished difference need not be clear.

These essays, predominantly, oscillate between opaque hairsplitting and flashy vulgarization. Thus in the already mentioned essay on Aquinas: "The universe of the early Middle Ages was a universe of hallucination, the world was a symbolic forest peopled with mysterious presences, things were seen as if in the continuous story of a divinity who spent his time reading and devising the *Weekly Puzzle Magazine.*" Then "along comes the mystic, with his nervous, stripped-down intuition, who penetrates with an almost drugged eye into the *garconnière* of the One, where the sole and true party is going on." This jocular leveling strikes me as no better than the devious overcomplications. And always there is sloppiness, as when, in the same essay, we read about an "Académie de France." There is, however, only an Académie française, which Eco momentarily confuses, I would guess, with the Collège de France. Of course, he knows better, but slovenliness even in small matters is, speaking nonsemiologically, not a good sign.

What I find most objectionable in Eco is what I would call, in his own phrase, "the 'bricolage' of the pop artist [or pop philosopher] who juxtaposes things out of context." Thus in a not uninteresting or imperceptive essay on the ruckus over Antonioni's documentary, *China*, in which Eco justly notes the cultural differences between Western socialism and Eastern communism, he ends by describing a discussion in a restaurant between Antonioni and a young Chinese critic, while "in the corner, ignored by everyone, a young woman with soft, sensual eyes was following the discussion. . . . This was the film actress Maria Schneider, but few would have recognized her."

What a trivial (not Trivial) ending to a respectable essay. Although Eco tries to justify this as a demonstration "that the protagonist of the evening was the Chinese," I think the real motive is showing off: I, Umberto Eco, with my usual savvy, spotted Maria Schneider, whom none of the other journalists and TV crews recognized. What does it matter that Miss Schneider, a usually unkempt, unwashed-looking creature, was not much of an actress, as she demonstrated in Antonioni's *The Passenger* and Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, the only movies in which she was noticeable; what does matter is that our master *bricoleur* can work her into his essay as a tribute to his perspicacity, his knowledgeableness, his being equally at home in high and low culture—if, as he might say, such categories still have meaning.

The first section of *Travels in Hyperreality* can be recommended to all readers, certainly to all American readers. But to decide whether one wants to read on, one should skip ahead to "The Comic and the Rule," where, along with some pertinent insights, misstatements abound. We read in a single paragraph that "anyone is distressed in seeing *Apocalypse Now*," by which, I'm afraid, Eco means not the wretchedness of the film but the supposed universality of tragedy as opposed to the alleged time-bound nature of comedy, whereas "for Woody Allen you have to be fairly cultivated." But Allen is a success almost everywhere, alas, and degree of cultivation is not the same ball game as time-boundness. The paragraph ends with the assertion that "Alberto Sordi and Totò cannot be exported to a number of countries," though Sordi at least has done very well in America and most parts of Europe. As for the allegation that Sid Caesar and Lenny Bruce are unknown in Italy—well, yes; except that, not having made movies, how would they be known abroad?

I suspect that Eco's international success depends not so much on his being tragic rather than comic as on the fact that he writes with such seeming authority on so many subjects that the average reader is awed and taken in. It would indeed require a fairly large panel of diverse experts to show up all of Eco's bluff. It might almost be worth convening it.

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The Reader Replies

The Gentle Art of the Resounding Put-Down

In his illuminating essay on the put-down in the Summer 1987 SCHOLAR, Aristides repeats the classic story of a lecture by philosopher J. L. Austin: Austin claims that, while many languages see a double negative as equivalent to a positive, no language sees a double positive as equivalent to a negative. To this claim, a member of the audience immediately responds, with a voice thick with sarcasm, "Yeah, yeah."

This story is invariably presented as representing the quintessence of the instantaneously conceived, crushing rejoinder. I would suggest that what it—or at least its acceptance as this—really represents is the victory of the flashy superficiality over the profound. Clearly Austin was speaking of the structure or grammar of language, not tone of voice. He was certainly aware that any meaning can be reversed by a sarcastic tone ("Sure, sure—this guy in the audience is a major thinker").

I have no idea whether Austin's point about the double positive is correct. But I do know that it is an important point and that this cannot be said for the wise-guy response the story celebrates.

STEVEN GOLDBERG
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Although Aristides is correct in declaring Samuel Johnson one of the great put-down artists of all time, I wish that he had mentioned the eminent lexicographer's memorable retort to his wife when she barged in a room and found her husband embracing the maid:

Mrs. Johnson: *Sir*, I am *surprised*!

Johnson: No, Madame. It is *I* who am surprised. *You* are *astonished*.

BURLING LOWREY
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Thoreau the Thorough Impressionist

Jacques Barzun's remarks in the Spring 1987 issue on Thoreau as thinker (as "opposed" to poet!) are surprising coming from a mature scholar. Can it really be that Barzun has missed the realities that Thoreau saw so clearly as a young man?

Thoreau is a truth-teller. He knows that the civil order does not work (this from his own experience); he knows from the collective experience of millennia that it is not "supposed" to work (this from books). What he is living out in the essay on civil disobedience is the outrage of a simple and honest man at being told—as, alas, Barzun joins in telling him—that he mayn't live peaceably on its margins unless he can offer a coherent alternative to it.

How can we take seriously Barzun's complaint that Thoreau's writings are inconsistent? Truth-tellers, from the Hebrew prophets to Chuang Tzu to Nietzsche to perhaps Derrida, are sane people living in human communities that are arguably pathological. Sanity here has to have a transcendent definition and there is no consistent way of arriving at one, except perhaps to say that truth has no practical application. Their only mistake was writing at all!

KENNETH L. MINER
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I found Jacques Barzun's "Thoreau the Thorough Impressionist" a misleadingly impressionistic assessment of Thoreau's thought and character. The conclusion, for instance, that "Civil Disobedience" is replete with contradictions and generally "a hodgepodge without definite aim" is dismaying.

At one point in the discussion of "Civil Disobedience" Mr. Barzun attributes to Thoreau the "principle" that "[t]he hero is as one to ninety-nine in a hundred; indeed, less than one." He states that this sentiment occurs directly after—"in sequence, not skipping any" (other "principles")—the exhortation that Americans "must cease to hold slaves and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people." Thoreau, however, never says anything about the hero being as one to ninety-nine in a hundred; and the "principle" immediately following the call for the abolition of slavery and the termination of the Mexican War is that "[t]here are

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nine-hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. . . ."

This misremembering or misreading of Thoreau has two consequences. First, by juxtaposing the principle that *he derives* to Thoreau's rhetorical question ("How many *men* are there to a square thousand miles in this country? Hardly one.") Mr. Barzun ignores the symmetry of Thoreau's parallelism. Second, and more importantly, by referring to "hero" rather than to the "virtuous man" that Thoreau had in mind, Mr. Barzun overlooks the distinction Thoreau makes between the *disinterestedly* virtuous (such as the blindly patriotic, who support the "broadest and more prevalent error") and the truly virtuous (who live intelligently and manifest a "cheerful self-reliance"). An essential point of Thoreau that Mr. Barzun seems to miss is that mere "patrons of virtue" are not entirely, nor necessarily consciously, bad; they *do* "see that the alms-houses are in good repair . . . [and] collect a fund for the support of the widow and orphans." The simplistic good/bad distinction on the basis of which Mr. Barzun criticizes Thoreau for contradictory statements ("the one and the many," he charges, "are by turns the good and the bad") is inapplicable to the passages of "Civil Disobedience" that he cites and obscures the fact that Thoreau's insights into human character were often as shrewdly discerning and cogently articulated as his acute perceptions of the natural world.

PHILLIP STAMBOVSKY
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JACQUES BARZUN replies: My two critics read Thoreau's essay through the haze of unthinking approval that has long been current among Antinomians—temperaments that resent, as by reflex action, any rule, law, or governance.

The first objector asserts truth to be Thoreau's inborn prerogative—as if anybody had ever doubted Thoreau's sincerity—and he thinks I impose on Thoreau a requirement which it never occurred to me to make.

The second defender is unwilling to put one paragraph of "Civil Disobedience" next to another. He sees no connection between the passage where "heroes," being "men of conscience," resist government, and the passage two pages further, where "true men" (surely potential heroes) are "hardly one among the 999" who give no more than lip service to virtuous political action. Even if I had "misread" these passages, which I did not, the remainder of my juxtapositions would show the relentless inconsistency of Thoreau's monologue.

It should also be noted that neither of my opponents pays any attention to the second half of my essay, where I pay homage to Thoreau's genius and show the root of his impressionism superior to logic.

Lifestyles of the Rich and Tyrannical

In her article "Lifestyles of the Rich and Tyrannical" (Spring 1987), Judith L. Goldstein contrasts the general contempt for the outrageous conspicuous consumption of Imelda Marcos and Michele Duvalier with the acceptance of and indeed admiration for other collections, such as crown jewels, etc. She finishes her article with a description of the male luxury spending of Malcolm Forbes in the form of a new yacht, implying that the principal difference between the Marcos and Forbes modes of conspicuous consumption lies in the gender of each. I submit that it is otherwise in the following sense. If one word were to describe the Marcos and Duvalier collections, it would have to be "chaotic." There is no order and no beauty to them. On the other hand, crown jewels and the Forbes yacht are characterized by integration, into the history of a people in the first case and into itself in the second. If the yacht were owned by Jackie Kennedy Onassis, it would be just as beautiful and just as acceptable. It is the violation of the sense of order and thus of beauty which is the primary offense of the Marcos and Duvalier collections.

ROBERT C. WHITTEN
Cupertino, California

I have enjoyed and was amused, indeed beguiled, by Judith L. Goldstein's article in the Spring issue. My enjoyment, however, was undermined by hearing the sound of an ax grinding. Throughout her article she is attempting—very wittily, I must admit—to prove that the attacks on Imelda Marcos were mainly motivated on account of her being a woman, not on account of her buying sprees run amok. I strongly disagree, and si licet parva comparare cum magnis (I hope I do not insult the readers of AMERICAN SCHOLAR by translating this saying: if one may compare a simple man with the great ones), I will use my own example. I, too, am enamored of shoes. The reason I do not have two or three thousand of them is simple: I do not have the means to buy them. This predilection of mine is a constant object of merriment for my sons, my friends—at least for those who know about it—and an eternal source of teasing on the part of my wife. My contention, then, is that if *Mr.* Marcos had been the happy owner of these mountains of shoes, the media would have gone after him with the same joyous zeal. To find in this an anti-feminine attitude is devoid of any justified bases.

I would like to be able to state that I was perspicacious enough to realize her bias right away. The truth, however, is far from it. I became aware of it only towards the end of her article—at the point where in order to corroborate her point of view she speaks about the yacht of Malcolm Forbes, pub-

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lisher of *Forbes* magazine. She is exercised over the fact that the writer treats Forbes's luxury spending without flippancy, almost with reverence. This she attributes to a simple fact: Imelda Marcos is a woman and Mr. Forbes is a man. But there is a world of difference between the two things. Mr. Forbes—a sincere advocate of capitalism—is perfectly entitled to buy anything because he's buying it with his own money. He has earned it, and, indeed, the conspicuous success in his case is an advertisement for the system he believes in. As opposed to this, Imelda Marcos was spending ill-begotten money, treasures of her country that she had appropriated from the poor, from her own people. And she was spending it as if there were no tomorrow (which, as it turned out, was true in her case).

What I find truly curious is Goldstein's objection to Forbes's framed front pages from the day the *Titanic* sank. She brands this questionable taste on the part of the owner of the yacht; I, to the contrary, consider it highly praiseworthy. It is, it seems to me, the modern-day equivalent of the Roman tradition of the slave who, standing behind the triumphant general in his hour of glory, would whisper in his ears: "Memento mori." It's the apotropaic antidote against man's greatest sin: hubris.

To sum it up: Mrs. Marcos was not under attack because she is a woman, nor is Mr. Forbes immune to it because he is a male. The first had squandered away money that had been the patrimony of her nation; the other one was spending his own well-earned money. If the two are not as different as earth from heaven, but only I see them so, whereas seen through the eyes of Professor Goldstein they're legitimately comparable, then I must be blind. (The last time I saw my ophthalmologist, he found that, with correction, my vision was almost 20/20.)

GEORGE JAVOR
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JUDITH GOLDSTEIN replies: In "Lifestyles of the Rich and Tyrannical," I attempted to show that the press coverage of the spending of Imelda Marcos and Michele Duvalier was far more problematic than it appeared to be. A number of assumptions, shared by both journalists and their readers, made my critical reading necessary. These shared ideas conflated conspicuous consumption and women's spending, connected legitimacy and material possessions in particular ways, and left unexamined the extent to which attributions of good and bad taste were a function of the status of the owners of objects rather than of the qualities of the objects themselves. It seems to me that Mr. Whitten's and Professor Javor's letters demonstrate some of the assumptions I was trying both to expose and to question.

Mr. Whitten suggests that the main difference between the Marcos and Duvalier "collections," on the one hand, and those of royalty and Malcolm Forbes, on the other, is that the former lack the "order" and "beauty" of the latter. However, one point of the article was precisely to reveal the *similarity* in the descriptions of the Malacanang Palace and Manhattan townhouse "collections," and that of the Crown Jewels of Iran. I don't think the description of the Crown Jewels I quoted corresponds to what Mr. Whitten would take to be orderly and beautiful. The objects in the royal collection combine, as do the Marcos possessions, what Western taste considers both high and low art. The Crown Jewels of Iran also include what we can call "curiosities," following early Western collecting terminology. In the case of the Iranian treasury, these curiosities are those brought from West to East (rather than East to West as in Western collections) and include toothbrushes and tooth powders. What this comparison demonstrates is not that one collection is orderly and beautiful and the other "chaotic," but that in the description of one we combine history, political legitimacy, and taste, and in the other we don't. The reference to history is an important way in which we legitimize possessions—this legitimating procedure was used in the nineteenth-century description of the Iranian Crown Jewels and in the contemporary journalistic account of Forbes's yacht. The attribution of good taste relates class, status, and power and is a function of who the owners are as well as what the objects are.

Professor Javor contends that the spending of Imelda Marcos is as different from the spending of Malcolm Forbes "as earth from heaven" because Mrs. Marcos "squandered" her "ill-begotten money," while Mr. Forbes "spent" his "well-earned money." It seems to me that we can use what I would like to call a "principle of excess" to judge expenditures in a finite world, regardless of the source of the money spent. If we agree that a "principle of excess" can be used as a critical measure, then it follows that both Mrs. Marcos with her three thousand pairs of shoes and Mr. Forbes with his sixth multi-million-dollar yacht could have been called to account for their luxury purchases. They were not.

Both Mr. Whitten and Professor Javor contest my claim that gender is such an important factor in our understanding of conspicuous consumption. What is at issue, for Mr. Whitten, is taste and beauty. According to him, "if the yacht were owned by Jackie Kennedy Onassis, it would be just as beautiful and just as acceptable." Professor Javor, offering a similarly hypothetical example, says, "if

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Mr. Marcos had been the happy owner of these mountains of shoes, the media would have gone after him with the same joyous zeal." Their examples only make sense if one shares their view that in our culture gender does not affect aesthetic and ethical judgments. I don't share this view and would reply that what is said about gender depends on what is being argued. The news coverage used Imelda Marcos's spending as a way of de-legitimizing her husband's reign. While I am not denying that Imelda Marcos spent, and spent outrageously, her spending, as I said in the article, "was, after all, the symbol of corruption, not its source." Because of our assumptions about the irrationality of the female consumer, we "bought" news stories that focused on pairs of shoes, and we did not question why we were not hearing more about the far greater sums spent on patronage, and the acquisitions by family and friends of real estate and industry.

Both Mr. Whitten and Professor Javor offer hypothetical examples rather than confronting head-on the analysis of my article, which was based on what journalists actually wrote. What mattered about the press coverage was not only what was said (at least in my reading of it) about Imelda Marcos as a female spender, but also what was left unsaid about the Marcos regime. When we read these news stories we did not learn as much as we might have about dictatorship, revolution and change in the Philippines, but, as I argued, we can learn a lot about what *we* think about women and spending.

Professor Javor approves of the way in which Mr. Forbes's spending "is an advertisement for the system he believes in." But he fails to see the ways in which Mrs. Marcos is also a product and embodiment of that system. In "Lifestyles of the Rich and Tyrannical," I claimed that our fascination with Imelda Marcos's shopping showed how we are both mesmerized and puzzled by our own commodity system. What we saw reflected in the press coverage of Imelda Marcos was our inability to understand conspicuous consumption as anything other than the result of women's compulsion to consume.

How Good Is John Ashbery

In "How Good Is John Ashbery," (Spring 1987) Robert McDowell's implicit backward gaze toward the bygone days of uncomplicated verse adorned by unmixed metaphors embodying "earned generalizations" governed by a sense of community would appear an inappropriate way of sighting Ashbery, much less those bygone days themselves. By deploying criteria that Ashbery's writing pointedly disavows—even while pretending to engage that disavowal—the critic merely displays his nostalgic faith, which is stubbornly pawned off as "balanced" retrospective judgment.

The claim that Ashbery's purported unoriginality inheres in his derivation from "poets" like Sir Thomas Browne, for whom mixed metaphors, elaborate syntax and parody-logic are basic aesthetic features, stands for McDowell's larger, unspoken critique of a tradition of writing that exempts itself from his categories. That such a tradition appears to conclude by summoning up the negative tells a truth "whether or not this accurately describes what we hope to experience by reading poetry."

WILLIAM FULLER
Chicago, Illinois

ROBERT MCDOWELL replies: William Fuller's reaction to my essay on John Ashbery contains nothing helpful and nothing new. It is fashionable (though the fashion is dying) to insist that an avant-garde still exists and has important meaning in contemporary literature. It is also fashionable to insist that certain writers, like John Ashbery, are somehow immune to the criticism that applies to others, and that critics who insist otherwise are forever looking backwards. These are the insecure, bullying arguments of the playground, and I do not subscribe to them. In fact, it is Mr. Fuller's argument, not mine, that is nostalgic. His is the expression of the reader who has come to a dead end—and likes it.

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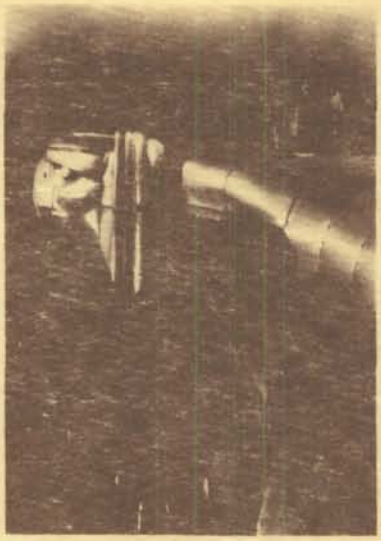

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